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Spring 2012

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TOO MUCH IN THE ECE?**

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The age old debate

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# FROM THE Editor



**"Providing the highest quality ECE is what centres and teachers strive for".**

Springtime. A time for renewal, especially if your early childhood education centre is set in a country-style setting. One such centre, Little Einsteins, is based in a rural setting and offers children a range of experiences including some activities some may see as 'risky'. Little Einsteins is one of four centres who share how their centre encourage 'risk taking' under the theme, Are we pampering our children in ECE? These centres are definitely not wrapping up their children in cotton wool! Have a read, study the photos and be surprised and inspired! Under this theme there is also an article from Gill Connell who offers strategies for encouraging children in your centre to take 'safe' risks.

Do you work with children who have disabilities? Read a personal story from an experienced ESW where she shares her experiences in helping children with communication, developmental and learning delays and her own transitioning-to-school strategies.

You may discover new approaches, plus have a chance to walk in someone else's shoes.

Also profiled in this issue are two centres, one community and one private, both centres sharing how they offer quality ECE under the theme, Community versus Private - the age old debate. Some research suggests community centres offers higher quality ECE. What do you think? Elizabeth Clements' article Community or Private - what's the difference? Discusses some of the issues that are often overlooked when this topic is debated. Have a read. What is quality ECE and who provides it?

The centres profiled in this issue express what quality ECE is to their centres and community. Providing the highest quality ECE is what centres and teachers strive for. So what is quality ECE? Is it 100 per cent qualified teachers in ECE centres? NZCA's Nancy Bell shares some of the findings from NZCA's 2011 research project comparing the patterns of teachers' who work in 100% qualified services compared with services in the 50-79% funding band. Do teacher qualifications matter?

Another article Nothing but the Best for ALL Our Youngest Children discusses what is high quality ECE and how to provide this to children who currently miss out. Along these lines is an article from ERO sharing its revised methodology for reviews of early childhood services. ERO wants to know how well placed services are to promote positive outcomes for all children.

So everyone let's go out there and do what we do best - support, nurture and educate our future.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue of Swings & Roundabouts, your story will inspire those who read it.

What type of articles or themes would you like to read in Swings & Roundabouts next year, if you have any ideas or thoughts please email them to [info@ecc.org.nz](mailto:info@ecc.org.nz). Or if you or your centre has a story to share about best practice and high quality ECE contact me at the above email.

**Trudi Sutcliffe**  
Editor

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# CEO's Message



Government has, in recent times, made increasing use of sector groups to develop ECE policy. Two advisory groups were established to advise the Minister of Education on quality in ECE; and on ECE quality as it applies to under-two-year-olds. Both groups made recommendations to the Minister, and these have already been released publicly. The Minister has alerted the sector to her intention to announce in September which of these recommendations are to be advanced.

More recently, the Minister has established a Sector Advisory Group on ECE Funding. The work of this group is likely to be fundamentally important. Many in our sector view the existing funding system as out-dated; reliant on high-cost, manual compliance requirements; and full of perverse incentives that have nothing to do with advancing quality of service.

Contrary to much recent practice, the Sector Advisory Group on ECE Funding has been established to advise the Ministry rather than the Minister. The first phase of its role is virtually complete, with the Ministry scheduled to provide preliminary advice to the Minister in August/September.

A challenge for the Sector Advisory Group on ECE Funding is to avoid being corralled into rejigging funding in a manner that would enable a Minister to cut funds for existing services in order to fund both initiatives targeted at vulnerable children, and the deficit created by the policy back-down on school teacher ratios.

The ECC and other parts of the ECE sector have signalled clearly, that while we support targeting services to increase access for families in lower socio-economic communities, we do not support the diversion of money from existing services to achieve this. While it would be possible to fund an increase in access for some by reducing quality for the majority, we would not consider this to be 'progress'.

ECC members support this position. A recent survey found 61% agreeing it was a good thing to increase participation in quality ECE by targeting 'vulnerable' groups. A resounding 93.4%, however, opposed such initiatives being funded by a reprioritising of existing funding.

Such a move would threaten the Government's target of 98% ECE participation by 2016, because it would risk making ECE unaffordable for non-targeted lower-income families.

## Private versus Community

This issue of Swings & Roundabouts speaks also to some of the myths that surround the private versus community debate in ECE.

There are those who believe not-for-profit ECE is morally better, and of better quality. We have addressed this issue to challenge the 'private-is-bad' myth, and encourage debate that is more balanced than is sometimes heard.

As Cleveland and Krashinsky (2009) found, there are numerous studies, but little evidence to support the view that privately-owned ECE is inferior. There is furthermore little evidence in recent ERO reports to suggest significant variance between private and not-for-profit services. While there will always be personal views on this issue, the evidence suggests that high-quality services can be found in both parts of our sector.

The ECC has a large membership of independent childcare centres. About 70% of that membership is privately-owned. About 30% is community-owned or not-for-profit. Whilst there are operational and governance differences between the two types of service, the vast majority of both are dedicated to ensuring the best possible ECE service for our youngest of children.

## So you know

### Welcome

The following early childhood centres have joined the Early Childhood Council from May to September 2012.

- Zigzagzoo Early Learning Centre, Queenstown
- Oak Tree Learning Centre, Birkenhead, Auckland
- Nurserydale Childcare Centre, Birkenhead, Auckland
- little Footprints Care & Education Centre Ltd, Lower Hutt, Wellington
- Riverside Educare, Wanaka.
- Topcare Early Childhood Learning Centre, Papatōetoe
- Choicekids Childcare Ltd, Manurewa
- Sunshine Childcare Centres, Hamilton
- Karis Kids, Marton (Provisional membership)
- Kids Play Ltd, Milford, Auckland.
- Acorn Early Learning Centre, St Heliers, Auckland
- The Cubby House, Palmerston North and Masterton
- Auntie Marias Childcare Centre Ltd,
- Waitakere City
- Elim Community Trust, Cambridge
- Acorn Early Childcare Education Ltd, Woodend, Christchurch (Provisional Membership)
- Kiwi Explorers, Nelson (Provisional Membership)

Welcome back to Bright Stars Educare Ltd, Hawkes Bay; Puffing Billy Daycare Centre in Auckland and Kidzone Governance Group, Wellington (used to be Kidzone Public Servants Childcare) who have all re-joined the Early Childhood Council.



# So you know, continued...

## New Zealand Teachers Council Te Pouherenga Kaiako o Aotearoa update Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers

### Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers

Look out for further opportunities to become familiar with these Guidelines. Workshops will be advertised through Kāimanga that will target services that have not had a representative attend the forty-eight that have already been held throughout the country. There will also be the opportunity to be supported by the Council to set up mentor teacher networks.

We ask you to please ensure that eligible provisionally registered teachers (those first registered between 1 June 2011 and 31

May 2012) and their mentors participate in the evaluation of induction and mentoring practices that is being conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research on the Council's behalf.

### Induction and Mentoring for Māori Medium Teachers

The Council has contracted a provider to offer professional learning and development around the Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers and Te Hāpai Ō. Mentors/pouako in Māori immersion settings will be contacted to enrol in these workshops,

but any interested mentors should respond to the Kāimanga notice if they would also like to attend.

### Appraisal and the Registered Teacher Criteria

The next big focus for the Council is appraisal of teachers against the Registered Teacher Criteria. Evaluation Associates is our contractor that will shortly be advertising the professional learning opportunities for furthering leaders' understanding in this area. Look out for the information that will come via Kāimanga in September/October.



**Early Childhood  
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## Annual Conference 2013

### "National Building"

Nation building is about leadership, in our sector as well as developing leadership in our children. It's about maintaining social harmony whilst learning to be independent. It's about deciding whether we are leaders or followers of our sector's future. Nation building is about accepting and confirming early childhood education is where it all starts – building the nation of tomorrow!



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For all ECC Annual Conference information, go to: [www.ecc.org.nz](http://www.ecc.org.nz) or call 0800 742 742



# ERO's reviews of early childhood services - *focusing on capacity*

**The Education Review Office has recently published its revised methodology for reviews of early childhood services.**

ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services (DRAFT) 2012 is the result of a great deal of collaborative work between ERO and the early childhood sector. The methodology is new, exciting and quite different from that captured in our 2002 Framework and Resources for the Reviews of Early Childhood Services.

ERO consulted widely with the sector during the development of the methodology. Early childhood services and parents were given the opportunity to complete a survey in 2011. The responses were then analysed and this analysis helped to inform the revised methodology.

## Ngā Pou Here

As always, at the centre of ERO's review process is the child. ERO wants to know how well placed services are to promote positive outcomes for children. To answer this question, the review framework - Ngā Pou Here - focuses on the key contributing factors for promoting positive outcomes for children in an early childhood service.

Ngā Pou Here is made up of four Pou (significant structures) that contribute directly or indirectly to creating the conditions that promote positive outcomes for children.

### The four Pou

- Pou Whakahaere – how the service determines its vision, philosophy and direction to ensure positive outcomes for children
- Pou Ārahi – how leadership is enacted to enhance positive outcomes for children
- Mātauranga – whose knowledge is valued and how the curriculum is designed to achieve positive outcomes for children
- Tikanga whakaako – how approaches to teaching and learning are responsive to diversity and support positive outcomes for children.

Within these areas ERO considers the effectiveness of self review and partnerships with parents and whānau. ERO evaluates how well placed the service is to make and sustain improvements for the benefit of all children at the service.

## Self review

One of the most important changes for the sector is an increased focus on self review. Putting more of a focus on self review means that the service and ERO can work together more effectively to identify what services are doing well, and where they need to improve or develop their practice.

Services are now required to complete a 'Self Report' – this gives services an opportunity to reflect on their own practice, tell ERO what is important to them and prepare for the external review.

Through self review, services will be better placed to look closely at how well they are doing for priority learners: Māori children, Pacific children and children with special learning needs. ERO also includes children up to the age of two as an additional priority group.

## Evaluation Indicators

ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services (DRAFT) 2012 includes evaluation indicators for education reviews in early childhood services. These indicators are based on extensive research and represent best practice. They are an excellent tool for both ERO and early childhood services to determine whether services are likely to be well placed to provide high quality early childhood education.

## Have your say

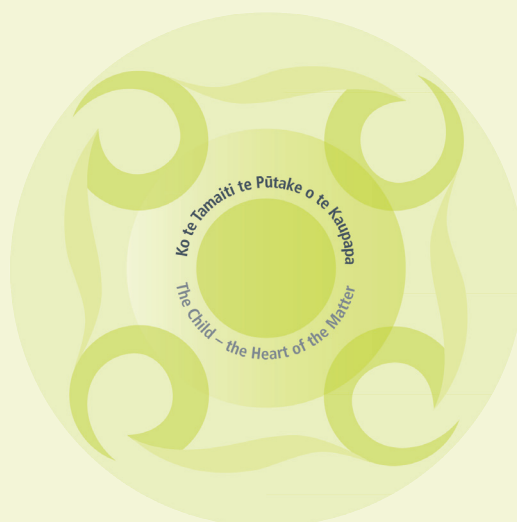
A significant change for parents and staff of early childhood services is the introduction of an opportunity to contribute online to the review of a service. This gives people involved with the service an avenue to have their say during the review process.

## Feedback

ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services (Draft) 2012 is on ERO's website and most\* early childhood services being reviewed in Terms 3 and 4, 2012 and Terms 1 and 2, 2013 will be sent a copy before their review.

The methodology will be refined and finalised in the middle of next year. Until then, you can give feedback on the methodology document itself, or those who have been through the new review process can complete a survey on ERO's website - <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/For-Early-Childhood-Services-and-Nga-Kohanga-Reo/ERO-Reviews-of-Early-Childhood-Services>.

\* There are separate review procedures for kōhanga reo Home-based education and care services and hospital-based education and care services will still be reviewed under the 2002 procedures.



# The 2013 Inaugural ECC Innovation & Improvement Award

Announcing, in association with the New Zealand Business Excellence Foundation and kindly supported by Telecom, the first Innovation & Improvement Award for the early childhood sector!

The ECC Innovation & Improvement Award will be an annual recognition of excellence in innovation and improvement within the early childhood education sector.

## The Award recognises examples of:

- Innovative practice – in management, curriculum delivery, ECE teaching practice or in some other way defined by the service. The key is that the innovation must be significantly innovative rather than a refinement of something done normally
- Improvement – in management, curriculum delivery, ECE teaching practice or in some other way defined by the service. The key is that the improvement must be significant and must reflect some aspect of the centre's normal practice.

## How will it work?

The ECC will invite expressions of interest from across our membership. An 'Expression of Interest' form will ask a range of specific questions to help determine the appropriateness of the entry. The expressions of interest will be shortlisted to a group representing the best innovation and improvement examples.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to submit a full application. The application form will seek information in detail regarding the innovation or improvement and will form the basis of the entry to be evaluated. The form will be limited to 15 pages.

All applications will be evaluated by a trained team. The Evaluation reports will then be handed over to a judging panel, made up of sector representatives, sponsor representatives including the New Zealand Business Excellence Foundation, and a representative from the Ministry of Education. The judges will identify the winner and may also identify one or more runners up or honourable mentions.

The winning entry will receive a cash prize of \$3,000, a framed certificate, a feature article in Swings & Roundabouts,

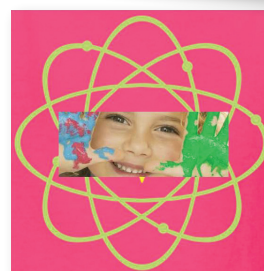
a feature item on the ECC's website, media coverage, a workshop slot at the ECC's 2013 conference, and the recognition of your peers across the sector.

## How much will it cost?

There is no cost to enter the competition. One entry per centre.

## What are the benefits?

- This is a special award recognising your innovation and improvement activities, and is unique in our sector
- It is positive recognition for you and your team
- It will help you to improve your planning and management
- It will help you to be more successful overall



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# Nothing but the best for all our youngest children



By Dr Elizabeth Clements

**In this article, I examine what counts as high quality and I share ideas for supporting high quality early childhood education (ECE) provision to children who currently miss out.**

## What counts as high quality?

Cryer (2012) says that quality in ECE is about “caring adults who are kind and gentle rather than restrictive and harsh and who protect children’s health and safety, while providing a wealth of experiences that lead to learning through play.” This applies equally at home and ECE.

Children need high quality care and education consistently through their first few years, no matter where they are or who is caring for them. Neither care nor learning is limited to any one setting. It makes sense then, to discuss quality both in the home and early childhood education setting, as well as looking at what happens between home and service.

A vital aspect of high quality that applies to both home and care and education settings is the quality of the young child’s relationships with significant others. It is the key factor in creating a safe, happy, learning child who has good chances of becoming a successful citizen. Neuroscientists (e.g. Gluckman 2011) tell us that children’s brains develop hugely in the first three years and that this development is shaped by the quality of a child’s relationships with significant others. For example, where relationships are poor, children do not learn self control and this is linked to risk taking behaviour such as suicide and accidents in the teenage years.

Children with poor quality key relationships are also likely to have behaviour problems. These not only interfere with other children’s learning and make life difficult for adults around them, they interfere with children’s ability to learn, thus handicapping them at school and in adult life (e.g. Wylie et al.).

A principles-based approach to quality allows flexibility for cultural difference. New Zealand’s early childhood education curriculum, Te Whāriki, is an example of a principles - based approach. Its four

principles whakamana, kotahitanga, whānau tangata and ngā hononga can be used as indicators of quality.

In formal settings, further indicators of quality are needed for several reasons:

- Safety.** Research (Gravitas 2005) shows that children are safer in their parents’ care than in the care of others. Non-parental or whanau carers may need more incentives to develop the warm, consistent relationships young children need to thrive. Other safety issues include the suitability of the environment, the number of children and adults in the setting and the ratio of adults to children.
- Accountability for public funds.**
- Expectations.** Our early childhood education services offer both care and education, as do parents. However, parents are not held accountable for the education of their children. Early childhood educators are.
- Self-improvement.** Indicators of high quality are also needed as guidelines for self-improvement.

Organisations also have greater complexities. A failure of any aspect may lower quality. For example, ERO suggests that “high quality arises from the interrelationships amongst, leadership, philosophy, quality of interactions amongst staff, parents and children, professional development, environment, self review, assessment practices, and management that makes high quality” (ERO 2010). There is also a strong emphasis on qualified teachers, with the knowledge of what children need to thrive.

New Zealand ECE has been through ten years of establishing a strong baseline for quality provision. We have regulations, a national curriculum, and mostly qualified teachers. The current challenge is to shift the focus from compliance to building quality. This will involve incentivising innovation, simplifying rules, reducing compliance costs to allow greater focus on the care and education of children, providing a guide to high quality ECE for parents as the complexity of the system

means parents struggle to know what high quality looks like, and measuring outcomes so that we learn what produces high quality.

## Letting in children who are miss out

The Early Childhood Council, along with most early childhood education agencies, supports universal provision while also supporting targeting for those who need more support. We also recognise, however, that the current government is operating in an unstable financial environment. The challenge to the early childhood sector has been to find ways of cutting costs in one part of the sector in order to give more to those who need more. Australian academic, Margaret Sims, claims that providing sufficient care for every child under five in the world would only cost 5 per cent of the world’s armament budget. Her point is that funding should not be taken from some young children to give to others.

So let’s look instead at some inexpensive changes that can be made to give more children an opportunity to experience high quality early childhood education:

## Stop using deficiency models

The children who miss out now are known to be primarily from low socio-economic backgrounds and are often Pasifika or Māori (MoE). Implicit in the provision of social services is the idea that Māori and Pasifika families, along with other families with little money, are deficient in some way and need help to reach the levels achieved by richer people.

This approach denies cultural difference. It denies the effects of history, geography and genes on shaping the positions we occupy. And it doesn’t work. New Zealand’s government departments and social service agencies recognise this and, in theory, adopt a ‘strengths based’ approach. The practice has been slow to follow.

To escape from a deficiency approach, we need to realise that people are doing what they need to do to survive in the world. When there is little money, small things can be big disasters. A heater

that stops working when there is no money to replace it is a big disaster. Poor people are less likely to have a car with a current warrant of fitness because it is expensive. If they are caught, the fines can be crippling. Then there are those with addictions, mental and physical illness, etc – no one chooses these – they are either born with them or they are survival strategies. To deal with these every person needs respect, safety, and a sense of belonging. As former Children's Commissioner, Ian Hassall (2012) says, "we are social creatures and without a personal narrative in which we have a secure place we lack structure, purpose and restraint in our lives." This applies to families, as well as their children.

### Audit the regulations for blocks to participation

Early childhood education sector groups are clear that some regulations block participation. Examples are the 'frequent absence rule' and the '15 minute rule'. Where families are struggling, the children may attend erratically. These rules penalise centres for a child's absence, making it difficult for centres to afford to have the child attend. Another example is the ECE government funding system, which is recognised as overtly complicated and which funds teachers for their contact time with young children, but does not fund for non-contact time (planning etc), while the Regulations demand that teachers engage in such non-contact activities.

### Measure outcomes

If early childhood education services monitor a child's progress, as well as reviewing their functioning, we will be able to tell what needs to change to allow every child to experience high quality care and education.

### Find out what quality looks like in different cultures

Quality is not an objective concept. It is culturally bound (Dahlberg). Te Whariki is an example of at least two cultural groups agreeing on a set of principles, as well as making space for appropriate interpretation of these principles. Most cultural groups can agree on some basic principles to guide practice.

For families and their children, 98% participation will mean more families feel they belong – that there is a place for them in our society. For the early childhood education sector, it means supporting diversity of provision, philosophy and cultural approaches.

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# Why teacher qualifications matter



By Nancy Bell

**There is now a wealth of evidence that teacher's qualifications are a key part of quality practice in ECE services, positively linked to children's long term learning outcomes.**

In 2011 Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa / NZ Childcare Association (NZCA) carried out a research project to find out more about the patterns of teachers' work in 100% qualified services compared with services in the 50-79% funding band. We were interested to know whether qualified and unqualified teachers were deployed differently and whether they interacted differently with children and their parents/whānau. We were also interested in comparing these two clusters of services. Was there any difference in the overall quality of the 100% services compared to the 50-79% services? Finally we wondered about children's learning experiences in these two clusters and whether the children were achieving the same or different outcomes.

The project, Early childhood teachers' work in education and care centres: profiles, patterns and purposes, was led by Dr Anne Meade with a team of four NZCA researchers. The NZ Council for Educational Research (NZCER) assisted in the statistical analysis.

Ten education and care centres took part – five of these were in the 50-79% band, five centres were in the 100% band and all enrolled children under two years. The centres were otherwise randomly selected from the Ministry of Education data base. These centres became part of two 'collective case studies' – the '100% case study' and the '50-79% case study'.

Each centre was assessed against the NZCER quality rating scale. Ten randomly selected children per centre (100 children) were then observed by the researchers, generating over 1200 minutes of data. These children were also assessed by their teachers using a modified UK social profile scale, and some items based on Kei Tua o Te Pae, Book 16 and Te Whatu Pōkeka (Ministry of Education, 2009). Finally researchers interviewed teachers and parents to explore the way they communicated about children's learning.

## The findings

While qualified and unqualified teachers were usually assigned the same duties, there were marked differences in their interactions with children. Qualified teachers were much more likely to have conversations (as opposed to brief exchanges) and to engage in 'shared sustained thinking' with children.

Overall the 100% centres rated higher on the quality rating scale. 100% centres rated at or above the mid-point for most indicators (e.g. 'adults add complexity and challenges for children') whereas 50% centres rated at or below the mid-point of the scales.

There were marked differences in the under 2s' caregiving routines between the two case studies. Almost all under 2s in 100% centres experienced continuity of caregiving because of key teacher systems, whereas this was not a feature of the 50-79% centres.

Teachers in 100% centres were better able to articulate theories and were more intentional about involving parents in children's learning, evidenced through their planning, the children's portfolios and the type of conversations that they had with parents.

Teachers were asked to carry out assessments of the children being observed. The results were interesting. Children in both case studies were seen to be similarly socially competent however children in 100% centres scored slightly higher on independence and concentration whereas the children in 50-79% centres scored slightly higher in cooperation and peer sociability. Notably the children in 100% centres engaged in more complex play than did their peers in the 50-79% centres.

However it was the 50-79% centres that rated higher on inclusion of te reo me ona tikanga. This seemed to relate to the cultural identity and competence of the centre's leaders. No services rated well on identifying and planning for cultural diversity.

## Where to from here?

Although most children now attend ECE services in the 80%+ funding band the current requirement is that 50% of an ECE service's teachers are qualified. This regulatory framework enables a 'quality gap' that is too wide. Every child should be interacting with a teacher who has the professional expertise to engage children in shared sustained thinking, found to be a key determinant of later learning success in the UK. Regulating 80% must be the Government's next step if it is serious about quality.

The research also raises big questions about the experiences of Māori children and whānau in 'mainstream ECE'. Centres otherwise rated high on quality were not implementing Te Whāriki as a bicultural curriculum nor were they building strong relationships with Māori whānau. In addition, all centres were unable to represent the diverse cultural backgrounds of their learners. Are we doing well for some but not all learners? This question is very timely in the context of the Government's goals to improve school outcomes for priority learners, starting with '98% of school entrants participating in quality ECE'.

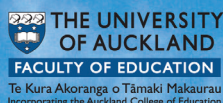
As teachers and professionals we must respond to these hard questions. If we are to serve our learning communities, holding a qualification is only the starting point.

You can download the full research report *Early Childhood Teachers' Work in Education and care centres: profiles, patterns and purposes*, Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZ Childcare Association, Wellington at [www.nzca.ac.nz](http://www.nzca.ac.nz).

**Nancy Bell is Chief Executive of Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa / NZ Childcare Association.**



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# Community or Private

## - what's the difference?



By Dr Elizabeth Clements

A review of recent Education Review Office (ERO) reports reveals about 12 per cent of early childhood centres are considered by ERO to need urgent improvements in quality. The centres that are considered in need of another ERO visit within a year are a mixture of kindergartens, playcentres and privately owned centres.

We all know that it is only high quality early childhood centres that give children a good start in life. If we use ERO reports as an indicator of acceptable quality, it seems that we cannot judge quality by type of centre.

Yet, from time to time, there is criticism of privately owned centres by people who believe all centres should be community owned. One such advocate is Linda Mitchell. In her research, she found that private centres have fewer qualified staff. This may have been true in 2002 when Mitchell wrote about the differences between private and community owned centres. But recent Ministry of Education figures do not show this difference.

English educator, Helen Pen (2011) argues against the privatisation of early childhood education provision on the grounds that the market cannot provide for everyone. She describes private provision as 'volatile, expensive for parents and frequently of poor quality'. It must be noted that her discussion is about the English situation. Every government recognises the market is volatile and does not cater for everyone.

That is why New Zealand has a raft of measures to provide early childhood education everywhere. And in relation to quality, Epstein (2009) found quality the same through public and private provision in the USA.

Sixty per cent of Early Childhood Council centres are privately owned with another 40 per cent being in varied forms of community ownership. Some are Trusts or Incorporated Societies while others are part of church or other larger organisations. All New Zealand early childhood education centres have to meet the same licensing criteria and the same regulations. All are judged by the same criteria during auditing processes. All are expected to base their teaching on the national early childhood education curriculum, Te Whāriki.

Both privately and publicly owned centres have particular philosophies such as Montessori or Christian philosophies. Many centres are affiliated to bodies that support them to improve quality.

Strictly speaking, what we call 'private ownership' of early childhood education centres in New Zealand should be called 'public-private' partnerships because the government funds private, sets standards to maintain quality and monitors quality.

In 2011, there were 2,366 licensed early childhood centres (Ministry of Education statistics). Of these 37.6 per cent are

privately owned. That represents 1,940 centres. Imagine if the New Zealand government decided to stop funding private owners. Over one-third of children who currently receive early childhood education would no longer receive any.

The reality in New Zealand is that there are great private and great community early childhood education centres. The mix of ownership types, together with the range of philosophies, styles and cultures is what New Zealand parents want and what works for making early childhood education available to all children.

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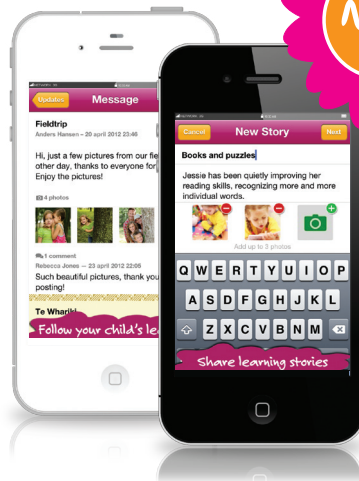
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# Profiling:

## Freyburg Community Preschool



We are a community based preschool licensed for 30 children – occupying two classrooms at Freyberg Community School. We have 3 full time ECE qualified and registered teachers and two part time registered teachers, one ECE qualified and one Primary qualified. Our ratio is the minimum requirement set by the Ministry of Education 1-10. We are licensed for children aged 2-5 but due to consistently full rolls and a waiting list, children are more likely to start after they turn 3.

Being a community based preschool with no profit margins needing to be met we are lucky to be able to offer 20 FREE hours to ALL 3 & 4 year olds. This has had a huge impact on increasing participation rates in ALL children. Before the introduction of the 20 hours scheme 95 per cent of our families were receiving a WINZ subsidy (subsidising 9 hours). With the increase in the number of hours children attend with the 20 hours scheme we have seen a huge increase in children and whānau sense of belonging and contribution – the more time children and whānau spend at preschool the better they get to know us and the more they feel part of the environment. Spending more time (more than 9 hours) at preschool in a

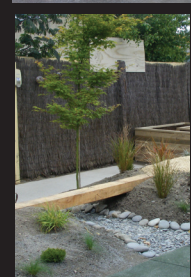
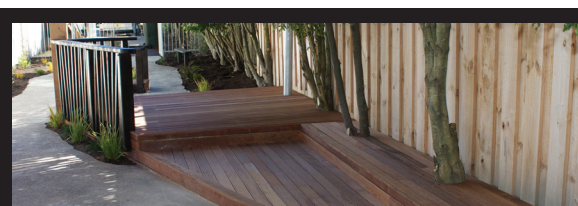
quality learning environment with qualified and registered teachers has also seen us farewell very competent, capable and confident 5 year olds to school. (Lucky for us it is not goodbye for 99% of our children as they come back and visit regularly in their lunch time, another perfect environment to support transition to school.)

We believe that quality is about the time spent with children and the teaching and support given to the children throughout their time in ECE. It's about have good resources to support the many and varying interests children have, it's about preparing children for the school environment and having expectations for learning. It's about knowing how to respond to children's interests, behaviours, personalities, how to motivate them, involve them, encourage them, and support them to become resourceful and resilient learners. It is also about the professional development opportunities that teachers have access to.

Our preschool philosophy is all about whānaungatanga and ako – it's about the people within the preschool and community and us all being on the same journey – everyone being a learner.

The Centre has a Manager who is also a teacher, administrator and committee liaison. One of our part time teachers is employed to release our Manager for one administration day per week. The other part time teacher is employed to release other teachers for non contact times and to cover lunch breaks. The Preschool is registered as an Incorporated Society and registered under the Charities Commission. It is run by a committee which includes parents/whānau, Preschool Manager and a School Liaison. The committee is responsible for the overall operation of the Preschool and approves budgets and expenditure. Anything over and above the approved budget needs the approval of the committee first.

Our preschool offers a free play environment but our expectation is children make good choices and are involved in meaningful play. Teachers respond to children's various interests in a variety of ways and this is documented in children's portfolios and wall displays. Being part of Freyberg Community School makes us quite unique and opens up a range of other learning opportunities for children. Children see their older brothers, sisters, cousins and friends on a daily basis



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through either visits from school children or involvement in school activities. We regularly participate in various school events such as PMP, Library Visits, Olympic Days, Rugby World Cup Events, Athletics Day, Grandparents Day and Cultural Celebrations. Through regular meetings with New Entrant teachers at the school we can align our curriculum to the school curriculum so that children moving off to school that term will be moving into a familiar environment and their transition experience becomes just an extension to their learning. We are lucky that the New Entrant teachers expectations of children's literacy and



the ability to learn is similar to ours so that expectations of children's behaviour and learning is consistent in both the preschool and school environment.

Private vs Public – the centre manager has worked in both settings and owned her own centre so has experience on both sides. It is really hard to comment of the benefits – pro's and con's as it really does depend on the individual centre. I have heard about community based centres that have a committee that make all the decisions without consulting the teachers and so really have no idea how it should be in ECE and have heard about private

centres that line their own pockets with profit and no money spent on updating or upgrading resources. Sometimes we think it would be great to have an extra teacher, (that fee's may cover in a private centre) but then I look at how independant our children are managing their own learning, and how sometimes teacher intervention can take that leadership away from children. We know (through comments from students, whānau and school teachers) that our children move on to school confident, capable and competent learners ready to step up to their next learning environment in a more formal setting.



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# Profiling: Annabel's Educare



Annabel's was established in 1998 and has evolved into a progressive and innovative organisation which is committed to quality early childhood care and education to families of the community in which each centre is situated.

Annabel's Education have 4 pre-schools and 2 private kindergartens in rural and urban areas in the South Island.

Annabel's places great importance on all children achieving their full potential in partnership with teachers, parents and whānau. This is achieved through the on-going holistic development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and dispositions within a socio-cultural community of learners. Being an Early Childhood Practitioner myself it has always been important to reach the 100% trained teachers target set by the previous Government, until the bulk funding cuts were made. Unfortunately with these cuts we had to foresee into the future of our business which meant making redundancies, as we were operating well above regulation ratios which could no longer be sustained. These funding cuts, the subsequent redundancies and continuing to maintain quality with lower

ratios have been our biggest challenges yet! All our centres are currently operating between 80-90% of trained teachers. Our staff ratios are between 1-8/1-10 in the pre-schools and 1:3/1:4 in the nurseries depending on the age ranges of children.

What is special about our centres is that they are all unique, warm and homely and are set on large sections in original renovated homesteads or purpose built facilities. We have a strong commitment to providing natural learning environments for children to explore and discover which are safe, secure and nurturing. We work in partnership with parents/whānau where they are supported in their role and are valued and able to confidently contribute to the child's learning journey. We have a strong commitment to the profession employing quality trained and registered early childhood practitioners, providing them with ongoing professional development and valuing them for the roles they play in providing quality care and education in each of our centres.

Our centres philosophy is to provide quality care and education to the families of the community where our centres are situated

and that can be different in each area eg: lower socio-economic, rural, urban etc. Our centres strive for excellence and this is evident through the provision of an extensive and well resourced discovery/ exploration programme, child initiated programmes, individual programmes based on Te Whāriki and supporting documents. Our commitment to quality means, respecting and valuing each child as an individual, having responsive and committed practitioners who deliver a high quality learning programme.

All children are given an opportunity to develop a knowledge and understanding of their own culture and the cultural heritage of both partners of the Treaty of Waitangi.

There is on-going professional development both internally and externally offered to teachers to meet their appraisal goals and to extend their current theory and knowledge which will ultimately benefit children. Self Reviews are undertaken to improve on the quality and ensure that we never think we are at the end of our journey.

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Parents/whānau choose our centres because of the warm welcoming environment, friendly teachers and the delivery of a quality programme, large natural indoor and outdoor environments which are well in excess of the licensing requirements and the exceptional value for money with no optional fee for 20hrs ECE. We regularly survey our clientele to get their feedback and to improve our services where necessary. We have built an excellent reputation and strong rapport through honesty and commitment to individual children, families and their communities. Our many positive attributes have been demonstrated and maintained over the past 14 years of operation as we believe strongly in setting and maintaining high standards.

I think high quality early childhood education is meaningful and purposeful learning and is evident when children have a feeling of belonging and a right to belong, have a perception of themselves as explorers and therefore the confidence to use a variety of strategies to help them learn and time to process their thinking so they can become motivated learners. Quality is when teachers actively use strategies such as listening, questioning and giving feedback and extend children by noticing, recognising and responding. Quality is also when teachers use professional dialogue on the floor and are open, honest communicators. Quality is what children experience in a day, from the



time they walk into the centre to the time they leave. The first years are forever and the best way to prepare children for the future is to meet children's needs and focus on their strengths in the present.

Personally I don't think a quality centre has anything to do with being private or community based. It matters as to how the centre is governed, an overriding philosophy, an operations manual that is regularly reviewed and adhered to, an annual strategic plan, budgets, a team of passionate teachers who deliver the programme and excellent customer service.

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# Literacy in the home setting: Implications for early childhood teachers

By Claire McLachlan, Ph.D.

The catchphrase 'parents as first teachers' sums up what research and common sense tell us. Children learn about language and literacy from their parents, caregivers, siblings and extended family. Language begins early and by only a few weeks old, babies are intentionally vocalising in response to the human face and voice.

Research shows the family is a powerful force for literacy learning across social and cultural groups (Anderson & Morrison, 2011). Morrow (2009) states that family literacy is a complex concept, but includes some of the following features:

1. It encompasses the ways families, children and extended family use literacy
2. It occurs naturally during the routines of daily living such as making lists, writing letters, sharing stories, and through reading, writing or talking.
3. It may be initiated purposefully or spontaneously as families go about their lives.
4. It reflects the ethnic, racial or cultural heritage of the family.
5. It may be initiated by the school such as story book reading, writing or helping with homework.
6. It can involve families going to school for concerts, parent-teacher conferences and programmes that children participate in.
7. It can include parents helping with reading, observing classes, sharing hobbies or talking at mat times in the classroom.
8. Parents involved in workshops designed to help them learn about and understand what they can do at home to help their children.

We know that some families provide a great deal of access for their children to literacy resources, such as books, writing

materials, computers, televisions and so forth. They can also provide mediation of these resources by reading to children, talking about print concepts (such as front, back, cover, pictures etc.), defining new vocabulary, showing them how to use writing materials and environmental print (such as TV guides, newspapers, bibles etc.), and by supporting children's interactions with digital technologies such as computers, television and so forth. Most family literacy research has focussed on the role of mothers, but the long-term benefits of fathers' involvement in their children's education at age seven predicts educational attainment by age 20 (Saracho & Spokek, 2010).

The research evidence is strong that families vary enormously in both the access and mediation that they provide. For instance, you can have a home that is rich in material literacy resources, but parents who are too busy or disinterested to support children to use these resources. In contrast, you can have homes that are materially poor, but language and interaction rich, in which parents actively engage in supporting children's growing understandings of literacy.

However, it is not the volume of language and literacy experiences that create differences in children's achievement. The differences emerge because children are not familiar with the forms of literacy practices used in centres. Moll (1990) calls the knowledge of literacy that children have "funds of knowledge" and argues that schools need to adapt curricula to include these different forms so that children's learning is legitimated. Research shows that differences between the literacies of the home and children's knowledge base and the education setting mean that some children are disadvantaged in educational settings, where their literacy experiences are not valued or recognised (Cairney, 2003; Wasik & Hindman, 2010).

Sénéchal (2011) proposes a home literacy model which further explains the different

outcomes in children's literacy. Sénéchal found that there are two types of literacy experiences that children are exposed to in homes: formal; and informal. Informal literacy activities included story reading which leads to vocabulary gains and reading for pleasure, while some parents also engage in more formal literacy play with sounds, rhymes and alphabet that led to greater literacy skills. "According to the home literacy model, informal literacy activities promote the development of language skills, whereas formal literacy activities promote the acquisition of early literacy skills" (p. 176).

Carter, Chard and Pool (2009) propose a model for improving early literacy skills that focuses on family strengths and routines and identifies ways to embed literacy opportunities within family life. They propose four strategies to explore with parents: creating opportunities; modelling reading and language; interacting with their child; and providing recognition families can create multiple meaningful opportunities for their child to engage with language and print.

Zeece and Wallace (2009) suggest that creating and sharing take-home literacy bags is a literacy-promoting activity that may be shared with children and families to provide support for emergent literacy, which builds on this idea of building on family literacy. The BAGS (Books and Good Stuff) take-home literacy kits are advocated as a simple method of promoting literacy. They suggest the following contents for BAGS (2009, p. 37): books with varying formats; developmentally appropriate activities to complete; small games; a surprise (such as stamps or manipulatives); a journal; a parent letter suggesting activities; and any additional resources suggested or donated by families.

Teachers are in a unique position to both support a child's developing literacy in

the centre and to support parents in their crucial role as educators of their children. As Sénéchal's research suggests, it isn't that some parents don't read to their children, they simply don't get as involved with literacy as other parents and this leads to different outcomes. Some simple suggestions via a newsletter for families or a parent education evening where teachers model different approaches to story reading or simple activities may help to boost parents' confidence on how they can best support their child to become a reader and writer.

**Claire McLachlan, Ph.D, is an Associate Professor, Early Years Education at Massey University College of Education.**

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# Safety Safari



By Gill Connell

Kids are born risk takers, not because they don't know any better, but because they have to be. Some measure of physical, cognitive, emotional, and/or social risk is involved in learning anything new. And for little ones, pretty much everything is new.

So, if risk is necessary for learning, by default, so is courage. Yet in today's risk-averse culture, we're often not giving little ones the opportunity to practice courage in favour of keeping them "safe." In my experience, there are many ways to accomplish these two, seemingly opposite objectives. Here's a great example...

## Rough 'n Tumble Play

Some time ago I was working with a group of teachers who were struggling with the issue of overly aggressive roughhousing on the playground. But unlike others who have asked me how to stop it, this preschool asked a different question: "How can we make it safe for the kids to roughhouse?"

Wow. Great question.

You see, rough 'n tumble or roughhousing is a great life lesson for all young boys and girls. **It teaches children how to CONTROL their own aggression (not become more aggressive as many adults think), RESPECT others, and stay within the often unspoken boundaries of SOCIAL PROPRIETY.** (If you're interested in the topic, I'd highly recommend *The Art of Roughhousing* by Dr. Anthony T. DeBenedet and Dr. Lawrence J. Cohen.)

But the issue remains. How do you make rough 'n tumble play safe (or at least, safer)? Note: nothing can 100% guarantee safety for each child in every situation. As I often say, all safety is "local". Only you know a child's temperament, maturity level, experience, and capabilities, so safety is ultimately your call. But there are some strategies that may help. Here's what we did...

## The Rough 'n Tumble Mat

First, the preschool invested in a new mat which we called the "Rough 'n Tumble Mat" to isolate the play.

The teachers introduced the idea to the children and started a dialogue with them about the benefits of having a dedicated place for rough 'n tumble. But this was more than just a safer place to play. It was a teachable moment. After all, keeping children safe and teaching children to think about safety are two very different things. So we decided the little ones might benefit from taking a Safety Safari.

## Safety Safari

The teachers took the children on a field trip all around the preschool, stopping at different locations and encouraging them to decide whether or not it would be a safe place for their new Rough 'n Tumble Mat. For instance, "Would the Rough 'n Tumble Mat be safe if we put it by the stairs? Or by the tables? Or near the swings? What would happen if we put it here?"

At each stop, the children were given the chance to envision what might happen, anticipating and discussing the consequences of each potential location. In fact, this "think safety" strategy worked

so well, the children wound up doing almost all of the surmising themselves and ultimately team problem-solving each location until they agreed the Rough 'n Tumble Mat belonged in an empty corner away from anything sharp.

Together, they all put the Rough 'n Tumble Mat in its new home. And then they took it a step further. All on their own, the children created their own rules of engagement. For instance, they decided that only two children should be allowed on the mat at a time. They talked about respecting each others' choices to play or not to play, and created a "trigger word" to signal when someone wanted to stop. The teachers encouraged them to talk about reasons why someone wouldn't want to play or might want to stop and soon enough, the children were able to empathise with what those feelings might be like.

Over time and with some practice, the Rough 'n Tumble Mat became a favourite place to play with fewer and fewer negative incidents. The play was still big and boisterous, yet somehow in setting their own boundaries for risk, and understanding a tiny bit more about the courage it takes to engage in rough 'n tumble play, the children's respect for each other seemed to solve many of the safety issues.





And one more thing...

**Getting children to think about safety will not only help them understand what to look out for, they may well think safety is THEIR idea.** And like the rest of us, when it's our idea, it's bound to be a good one!

### Take a Safety Safari at Home – tips for parents

Kids learn best by doing, so invite your child into the safety assessment process by empowering him to think about it and talk about it in his own way.

Take a tour of your home together, and ask your child what he thinks is safe and unsafe for him to do in the various rooms of your home. Gently guide him to tell you what he sees as safe and unsafe, praising him for being able to anticipate safe areas for play and areas where certain types of play might not be a good idea.

Here are a few suggestions to get you started on your Safety Safari...

**Start with specifics.** I wonder if playing chasing games would be a good idea in the kitchen? What do you think would happen if you ran on the floor when it was wet? Where would be a better place to play chasing games?

**Draw from your child's own experience.** Remember the time mummy dropped the cup and it broke into a lot of sharp pieces? The cup was made of glass. What else is made of glass? What would happen if someone bumped into that vase or ran into the window?

**Let your child take the lead.** You're really good at doing somersaults. I wonder what might be a good place to do them? Where else could you do somersaults safely? Can you show me? Why would this be a safe place for somersaults? Why wouldn't this be a safe place for somersaults?



#### About the Author

Gill Connell is the founder of MOVING SMART Ltd, co-author of MOVING TO LEARN, and a teacher of teachers, parents, and young children. Gill is a child development expert with a unique focus on the role of movement and play in the natural process of children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. For more insights into why kids do what they do and what you can do about it, and information about Moving Smart workshops in your area, please go to <http://www.movingSMART.co.nz/resources-and-courses/workshop-schedule/> To read more on Gill's blog go to <http://movingSMARTblog.blogspot.com/>



# Risky Business

By Sherryll Markie-Brookes

**At Fantails Childcare we have created an environment where children can run, kick a ball; wallow in the mud, set their own balance walks to the sandpit, skip in the rain, watch storms from the sandpit and climb trees. Yes...climb trees! No safety harnesses, no padding under foot or any aid from teachers. Do children take the risk knowing that they may fall... YES!!!! Do they keep trying until they are tall enough to climb into the first branch? YES!!!! Does it make their heart "flutter" as they climb higher? YES!!!! Are they elated when they reach the top...YES!!!!**

Children naturally seek challenge and, despite adult concerns, engage in risk-taking as they expand their world view, developing an understanding of themselves and others, and endeavoring to gain competency in a vast range of skills (Children's Play Council, 2004; Stephenson, 2003).

There has been a lot of controversy over the years regarding the safety of children in an environment where the ratio of adults to children far outweighs the normal two adult families. But when we were children we climbed trees and there were often no adults around. What has changed? Are we pampering our children too much?

Helen Little and Shirley Wyver from Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University say...

"Although the term 'risk-taking' often has negative connotations, the reality is that the willingness to engage in some risky activities provides opportunities to learn new skills try new behaviors and ultimately reach our potential. Challenge and risk, in particular during outdoor play, allows children to test the limits of their physical, intellectual and social development".

Through exposure to carefully managed risks, children learn sound judgment in assessing risks themselves, hence building confidence, resilience and self-belief, qualities that are important for their eventual independence (Children's Play Council, 2004).

The provision of opportunities for risk-taking in children's outdoor play does not mean that safety is ignored. Rather it means that parents and teachers need to be acutely aware of the hazards and take all necessary steps to ensure that the environment is safe (Henniger, 1994), and to have adequate staff ratios to support physical play (Lam, 2005).

At Fantails we have worked with parents to reassure them that every endeavor is taken to eliminate potential risk. Between staff, parents and children we designed our "Tree Climbing Risk Assessment Policy". This covers everything from clearing potential dangerous objects from beneath the tree to tying yellow ribbons in the branches so children know how far and how high they can climb.

**"It means that parents and teachers need to be acutely aware of the hazards."**

Not allowing children to play freely and explore their environment has a single benefit (safety) outweighed by multiple risks—compromised development, decreased physical exercise, increased obesity, limited spontaneous play opportunities, and loss of a sense of place and enjoyment.

At Fantails we have the pleasure of watching children learn the virtues of determination, commitment, assertiveness, unity, flexibility, helpfulness, patience, purposefulness, responsibility, self-discipline, steadfastness, tolerance, trust and courage.

Who said you never learned anything from climbing trees?

**Sherryll Markie-Brookes is the Manager at Fantails Childcare, Silverdale, Auckland. She is a registered teacher in ECE, has obtained a DIP Child Protection Studies – Child Advocacy and is a Professional Development Facilitator/Consultant in ECE.**





# Risk taking at Little Einsteins

By Jayne Dahberg and Jo Maddison

The issue of physical risk taking in Early Childhood has long been widely debated by parents and teachers alike. If we are actively preventing our children from experiencing elements of risk, are we ourselves running the 'risk' of depriving them of valuable learning opportunities or worse, the ability to be able to evaluate danger/risk later in life? While safety remains paramount, at Little Einsteins Educare, we encourage our learners to test the limits of not only their physical but also social and intellectual development in a well managed risk taking environment.

Little Einsteins Educare is a rural centre for children aged 0-5 years of age, located minutes from the centre of Cambridge in the heart of the Waikato. Our centre has a strong relationship with both the environment and animals in a farmland setting. We provide children with high quality learning experiences that move beyond the buildings, out to in the paddocks with many different farm animals enabling them to experience a real "grass roots" aspect to their upbringing in their formative years- a contributing factor when parents choose us.

Starting right from our youngest learners, infants and toddlers are encouraged to leave the relative sanctuary of our licensed area. Particularly appropriate to this age, they employ each of their senses – see, smell, taste, touch, hear as they are supported by their teachers to engage in a way that feels safe for them, stimulating their risk-taking journey. They gain confidence as they come across any number of animals, from cows and ponies and lambs to chickens, rabbits and turtles, initially daring to get close to the animal before reaching out to touch the animal. It is not uncommon to come across a tractor to investigate, feed the pigs or the chickens, trudge and stomp through mud puddles in the winter and weave through the cornfields in the summer.

The older children are tree climbers, carpenters, swimmers, horse-riders, shepherds, cow herders... the list goes on. Teachers challenge themselves to utilise the open spaces available. This year when a self review was conducted by our preschool teachers on how we could use the philosophies and ideas contained in the 'bush kindy' approach they investigated the potential of these ideas for our program for 3.5-5 year olds. Undertaking professional development in this area added confidence to experiment with different resources and resulted in regular full 'paddock days' where just about every aspect of the program has been conducted from the paddock (even the cooking and serving of lunch)!

Our centre parents' ideas about risk taking and the variation in level of risk they are comfortable with their children being exposed to, is diverse. Parents feel different levels of 'protection' for their children – some are just more relaxed than others. We find strong communication with families right from

their child's enrolment works best. The nature of our environment and centre philosophy, sound hazard assessment, and our research based approach to teaching involving risk taking inspires parent confidence in our teachers' abilities to prompt learning through risk taking. Often we find parents use our staff as a resource for ideas that "remove the cotton wool" at home as well as here. At all times respect is given to a parent's perception of managed risk. Teachers are aware of what a sensitive issue this can become and balance what has evolved in the child's whānau environment, experiences and values, with delivering enriched learning experiences.

While it remains a debatable issue in early childhood education, we are confident that children exposed to risk in a well managed way, become responsible independent risk takers themselves as they journey through life. For this reason, it is our belief that well managed risk is not just an option in early childhood, but an essential part of our precious children's development.





# KidzZone Preschool taking healthy risks

By Aimee Waugh

**We are KidzZone Preschool and are located in Otumoetai, Tauranga and licensed for children aged 3 months to 5 years.**

"Children benefit developmentally from risk in play", this is why at KidzZone preschool we don't believe in wrapping our children in cotton wool. We are very fortunate that our location means the beach, estuary and park is within a 5 minutes walking distance. We aim to get out of the centre environment every week to climb trees, rocks, sand hills or whatever else we may find on the day.

Our children aged between 3 and 4 are confident in pushing their limits and are confident in their abilities so they are always keen to try new risks and challenges. We also believe that you can not expect children to have the confidence to try new risks, if you're not prepared to give it a go yourself, which is why you will always see a teacher up a tree or being involved in the risk of that moment.

In our immediate preschool environment teachers are constantly finding and bringing resources from home such as drift wood planks, stumps, cable reels, tyres etc to create a variety of risky opportunities for the children.



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# Is there a place for balance bikes in ECE centres?

By Amanda Davies

Balance bikes are becoming increasingly popular amongst New Zealand preschoolers and their parents, but do they have a place in early childhood education? After seeing the benefits with my own children and others, I say absolutely. Some may say I'm biased, so it is worth considering the story of Ian.

Ian (23 months) had been observing others in his centre riding balance bikes. If a balance bike was lying on the ground, he would go over to it and spin its wheels. Eventually he gained the courage to pick up a bike and walk beside it while pushing it around. Over a number of weeks Ian continued to push the bike around the playground. Although his teachers encouraged him to sit on the bike he refused until, in his own time, Ian built up the skills and confidence to sit on the bike and propel himself around. Ian had observed others, set his own goals and persisted until he was able to achieve them by himself.

He was able to experience an environment where he could gain confidence in and control of his body while also discovering that he could participate and take risks without fear of harm. (Te Whāriki)

Balance bikes allow children to discover balance and steering control in their own time and comfort zone. Coordination, balance, agility and spatial awareness develop as the child plays.

As the skills and confidence of the child grow they find ways to make the bike travel faster and search for variations in terrain to provide further challenges. This provides an opportunity for risk taking and allows children to assess the likelihood of success or failure with regard to their own abilities. Being able to experience this within their own boundaries teaches the child resilience and provides them with a basis to develop responsible attitudes towards future judgments of risk.

What does a Centre Director have to say?

**"Our balance bikes have become one of the most popular physical play resources in the centre. We have observed children who are normally reticent in mastering new physical skills dramatically grow in confidence and derive great satisfaction from being able to ride these bikes. And that is just the beginning – the bikes provide a springboard for all sorts of other learning, including language and social skills."**

**Eric Hollis, The Ole Schoolhouse, Rotorua.**

With so many different balance bikes available on the retail market it is important to consider what each bike is offering and if they meet the needs of your children and environment. Some key things to consider when purchasing balance bikes are:

- **Weight** – Choosing a bike that is lightweight is important with this age group. If a bike is too heavy and awkward for a small child to easily pick up they will quickly lose interest and move on to something else.



- **What age group range are you catering too?** Generally balance bikes are suited to children between 2 and 5 years old. Children as young as 18 months can start to ride a balance bike if the bike is small enough for them to stand over and manoeuvre. If you are considering a balance bike for 'under two's choose a bike that is designed specifically for this age group.
- **Frame shape** – Ensure a child can sit on the seat and easily reach the handle bars without having to stretch too far forward. Choose a bike with a seat height lower than the inner leg length of the children. A model with easy seat height adjustment will mean the bike can be used by a wider range of ages, otherwise consider getting bikes of two different sizes.
- **Durability** – Ask specific questions about the materials the bikes are made of. A bike made of high quality materials that are resistant to warping and corrosion will last much longer in an ECE centre setting. Also consider how easily you can get spare parts.
- **Safety features** – Look for a bike with a mechanism to prevent the handle bars from steering too far and covers on sharp edges to minimise the risk of injury.
- **Available space and surfaces** – Outdoor space on a firm to hard surface is best. Any area that can be utilised as a loop circuit with changes in grade and surface is ideal.
- **Helmets are a must!** Look for a reputable brand that is easily adjustable and infant or preschooler specific so they can be easily fitted correctly to each child.

For more information about balance bikes go to: [www.likeabike.co.nz](http://www.likeabike.co.nz)



# Walking the Talk

**Giving Early Childhood Teachers practical strategies for bringing language to life is at the heart of the Teacher Talk training developed by the internationally renowned Hanen Centre specifically for early childhood centres. The programme is being delivered for the first time in New Zealand by Paula Morrison, Speech-Language Therapist for CCS Disability Action.**

Teacher Talk aims to give fresh insight into tailored teaching strategies for the differing communication styles and learning needs of young people. While this may sound like an added challenge in an already busy pre-school classroom, for many of the attendees to date it's provided a welcome set of tools to pique the interest of those children who are typically more challenging to engage.

"Early Childhood Teachers can have an incredibly challenging role at times, juggling the diverse needs of preschoolers in their classroom. Teacher Talk focuses on giving these teachers specific tools for tapping into each child's communication needs. It's particularly useful for those children who might be shy or have difficulty communicating with their peers, but people who have completed the course are seeing real benefits for all children which is, of course, the overall aim," she says.

For Paula the course fits well with CCS Disability Action's wider emphasis on inclusive education. "The Hanen Centre has a proven record in delivering best practice, so it's exciting to have a chance to share this with early childhood centres and staff. It's not specifically designed for children with a disability, but as with all the practicing strategies we use with the young people we support, we see the potential to improve the educational and social outcomes for all children," she explains.

"For us truly inclusive education is a recognition that all children can participate, thrive and enjoy the same opportunities in an early childhood centre. We all just have different ways of interacting and communicating, so it's about finding innovative ways to achieve that," says Paula.

Teacher Talk tackles three modules; Encouraging Language Development in Early Childhood Settings, Let Language Lead the Way to Literacy, and Fostering Peer Interaction in Early Childhood Settings. It is delivered as a full day, or over two evening sessions.

"We break down the basics of language development and demonstrate simple ways that teachers can nurture greater responsiveness and interaction in all children such as different ways of grouping children or tailoring your language use to suit student's language abilities. We see teachers as a responsive partner in student's learning, so it's about breaking that down in a practical way. We send everyone away with an action plan and feedback so far suggests that individual teachers and a number of centres have



some really exciting ideas to put in place for the future as a result," she says.

"As centres know, these early years are the perfect time to extend and encourage children's language development particularly as there's clear evidence to suggest that this will foster learning and socialisation in later life. This has become increasingly important given the shift towards preschool children spending more time in the early childhood environment, so it's great to be able to empower teachers with knowledge that hopefully make their jobs easier and outcomes for children better!"

The course is available at a fixed price for centres for up to 20 teachers at a time. If you're interested in learning more about Teacher Talk, or if you or your centre is interested in registering get in touch with Paula Morrison, CCS Disability Action, 09 414 9778 or email [Paula.Morrison@CCCDisabilityAction.org.nz](mailto:Paula.Morrison@CCCDisabilityAction.org.nz)





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# Jack Of All Trades

## – Master of None



By Tina Robinson

Hello, my name is Tina and since May 2007, I have worked as an Educational Support Worker (ESW) in various different types of preschool and childcare centres. I would like to share with you some of my experiences in helping children with communication, developmental and learning delays.

Although, I had worked in a variety of industries, including banking, aged care and children's recreational gymnastic, and had raised two pre-schoolers of my own I didn't realise how many more skills I would need to learn and use in my ESW role:

- Consciously 'slow myself down' and 'pace' my language to match the needs and abilities of each child;
- Simplify my words;
- Pause and wait;
- Let each child process (the information / instructions) and respond in their own time (or way);
- To follow their lead and use their 'interests' to create opportunities for learning and communicating.

These are just a few of the skills I've learnt along the way. Many of which I've learnt through practical hands-on experience, on the job.

When meeting anyone for the first time, it is important to build rapport, however in my role as a support worker it is also extra important to build a high level of trust. Although most children accept my presence quite quickly, a few have been reserved and I have had to 'soften' my initial approach.

So, instead of approaching them 'head on', I've had to put myself along side or nearby, engaging their peers first and let their natural 'curiosity', do its work. While, with others I might have to make my voice and actions bigger and bolder than normal. The real trick here is to be adaptable and be prepared to quickly change tact if something doesn't work.

Most children with developmental delay or physical disability are often more reserved than their 'peers' and need a lot more support to settle into any new environment.

Also several of the children I have worked with have also had additional challenges, which have affected the way they involve themselves within the centre. Challenges like, "Limited Emotional Response", which could stem from not being able to recognise happy, sad or angry emotions or "Heightened Sensory Sensitivities".

A child with heightened sensory sensitivities can quickly become over stimulated or overwhelmed because the room they are in is 'too busy, too loud, too hot or too brightly lit', which in turn could trigger meltdowns and behaviour issues.

While another with sensory issues can find it hard to touch 'unfamiliar textures', (textures like sand, thick-cold goo or prickly cocoa husks or even grass) and as a result of being 'too scared' will stubbornly give these activities a wide berth. Even having someone touch them could also cause them to pull away sharply or hit out.

As adults we often take it for granted that all children are natural explorers but until some feel safe and secure in their environment or able to self-manage their fears, it can be hard to capture their interest to try new things or extend their social play.

Often the first step is to keep 'offering or re-offering' activities in the hope one day a spark of interest is shown. Getting that first eye contact or glance at something that I've just pointed to, is a 'window of opportunity' to introduce the activity again.

Holding hands and doing it with them a few times is a good way to support them. Once they get the 'hang' of the game I can then step back a little at a time, as their confidence grows.

Two very important strategies to help settle and support children at preschool are 'Routine and Repetition'. For children with developmental delays, it is especially

important to model and break down daily routines into easy repetitive steps.

Supporting the child's speech and language development has to be the highest of all priorities. The hardest part is not setting too high an expectation to early, as some children can be very sensitive to the amount of pressure put on them to verbally communicate. The communication strategies I use with each child is under the guidance of a Speech Language Therapist and supervising Early Intervention Teacher.

Depending on each child's ability, some communication strategies I use include Makaton signing, visual pictures or symbols cards, (supported by lots of repetition and modelled language). Sometimes it's not just the ability of the child but the 'situation' they are in that may also need supporting.

One situation could be that while on the mat, a child with limited speech feels totally comfortable playing trains along side others, but their peers are reluctant to include them in their play because previously the child may have used their hands as a means to communicate.

Sometimes the 'peer's' level of language skills may also limit communication. They may not know what words to use to engage the child in co-operative play and from a distance it may look that both parties are ignoring each other. This is where I step in, to bridge the communication gaps, and use the opportunity to 'feed in' (model) language, to both parties.

Action songs and rhymes are great ways to help 'feed in' simple language. Many children quickly learn to copy gestures and associate them with the matching words of the song. In early communication development most children will use gestures to request a 'favourite' song. Best of all they can be sung anywhere and their peers can join in the sing-a-long too.

Inviting a peer or a small group of friends to join in activities, such as reading, rolling cars down a ramp, taking turns pulling & riding in a trolley, sitting

together at the kai table can also support communication and social interactions.

A child who 'flits' from one activity to another can be challenging. They don't settle for long despite being offered many activities, or they don't want you following them and keep moving away. It's fine to step back. Tomorrow's another day!

Children who have limited attention span often struggle with sitting on the mat for lengthy group activities. 'Expectations' they will stay on the mat can quickly turn a fun experience into a negative one and lead to disruptive behaviours.

So again it is about finding the right support strategy to help the child join and stay at the activity. Do they need a support person to sit with them, do we let them hold something calming to 'fiddle', or do we let them play quietly just off the mat, so they can still see and hear what's happening.

Whatever we decide to do we have to be consistent, yet flexible for those times when things do turn to 'custard' such as too many children crowding a planned 'one-on-one' activity.



A personal goal I set for myself is to help prepare the children I work with in being ready for their 'transition' to primary school. For some children, it could be a lengthy transition and while for others, it may be shorter transition time, depending on their needs and abilities.

With some children once they have discovered their 'voice' or gained confidence to explore, they seem to go from strength to strength, while for others, everything they do has to be transitioned before they move onto the next step.

When children start school they are expected to fit into a more (academically) structured and faster paced environment. While most children quickly adapt and excel within the mainstream structure, other children can find the transition from the preschool free play environment to school very daunting.

For a child with special needs the new environment can be overwhelming and changes in routine can easily trigger 'old' behaviours requiring many pre school visits.

One child I helped support through this transition period needed daily visits over

a full school term. We started with short 5 minute visits, and gradually built the length of time.

Many new entrance teachers and primary schools are proactive and keen to take on the child's established routines and strategies. More schools are realising a full days schooling can be physically tiring and mentally stressful for some children, so are introducing regular 'down time' periods, or in some cases starting the child on reduced school hours.

In my personal opinion, there is still a lot more to be done within the preschool and mainstream schooling environments to cater and support children with special needs.

In preschool many of the trained teachers have told me they don't have enough training in this area to approach these children's needs.

For someone like me (Jack of all trades), who has had to basically learn on the job, with minimal formal training, yet uses many of the same skills as a certified educator, I sometimes smile when someone calls me 'teacher'!

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# Secure Attachment for Children - our common goal



By Eva Scherer

Sixty years have passed since scientist Harry Harlow showed that young mammals need close body contact with parents, and that it has a value even more important than that of food and shelter. Children can not develop properly without touch.

During these years we have experienced large shifts to our lifestyles and the manner of raising our children. The role of parents has changed and now involves more professionals and new terms such as "primary caregiver" that emphasises the role of child care is no longer reserved for the mother only.

As an example take a closer look at a very successful approach to parenting, the Leksand model.

Starting in the Scandinavian countries, but now expanding to include the UK and other European countries, including Russia, it provides a unified approach to equip parents with the education needed for the task of raising children. When the midwife first meets the future parents,

she welcomes them into a parent group. From there, pre natal education involves:

- Midwife
- Psychologist
- Preschool teacher
- Family counsellor
- Social worker
- Daddy coach
- Nurses from a child healthcare unit
- Family therapist
- Social benefit advisor

All these professionals educate future parents in how to nurture their child. One year later post natal classes emphasise the role of pre-schools.

This model counterparts with the New Zealand Parents Centre and other emerging community hubs. To quote from the Ministry of Education "Over the past century, early childhood care and education services in New Zealand have been established to meet the particular needs of children, parents, and communities, as well as those of society as a whole. Today early childhood services are jointly involved with families in the socialisation, care, and education of children."

It is with these thoughts in mind that the Child Connection Trust offers a programme for early education centres to learn massage therapy - our particular expertise is teaching Secure Attachment building skills.

In the "Tiny Tots" Right Brain Learning/ sensory stimulation programme developed especially for preschoolers we put equal attention on 3 elements:

- 1) Vigorous touch games that children play between themselves
- 2) Back massage that caregivers deliver to children during nap time
- 3) Homework for parents - Bond/Secure Attachment building games to be practiced with children at home.

## Let's look closer at these 3 elements

### Vigorous touch games that children play between themselves

The car wash game is a favourite of toddlers. Two children play the role of brushes. They are on their knees each side of the "driveway". The queue of toddlers are passing slowly between "brushes", experiencing washing/vigorous massaging





which starts from the head through to the deck/shoulders and front wheels/arms and finishing on the legs and feet/back wheels. Each child wants to stay longer, but the rules are an equal time slot for each "car". When toddlers are familiar with the game they tell their preferences to the "brushes". Some want longer head "washes", some arms, some legs. Their awareness of their body is developing.

Another popular game is "shop with musical instruments". The instruments can be guitar or piano. Each time the child chooses which instrument they want to be. Guitar is very "ticklish", but children love it, sometime making it a competition as to who will stay the longest. Piano – back massage develops creativity and fun. This game is performed by a teacher. The child lies on the teacher's knees, while different songs are played on the toddlers back.

### Back massage that caregivers deliver to children during nap time

According to a long term study in 2008 on 110 toddlers by Uppsala University in Sweden, "Daily touching by massage lasting 5-10 minutes could be an easy and inexpensive way to decrease aggression among preschool children".

We value this nap time massage as an important way to build secure attachment. Just opening a jar with nice smelling massage wax makes children slow down and be ready for a nap. After receiving the acceptance of each child, a 5 to 7 minute massage session by a teacher has a calming down effect. It is of course not a proper back massage. During the "Tiny Tots" course, early childhood education teachers are shown different techniques. Before applying it to children the teachers themselves feel the differences between the strokes on their own bodies, building confidence of being touched and giving touch.

In nap time, apart from touch itself, an additional sensory stimulator is used – smell. Teachers use organic Tui Balm on the hands of the child so that the child can breathe a nice smell. We use two fragrances. "Pacific Night" balm with Jasmine, Sandalwood and Neroli and "Mountain Forrest" balm with Cedarwood and Cypress fragrances.

### Secure attachment in the home

Today's parents are much busier than they used to be in the past. After dealing with the routine matters of family life such as meals and planning tasks for the next day, parents are quite happy to put children to bed and relax for a while. They can miss the precious "together time" of listening to the child and giving him loving attention when attachment and bonding are created. This opportunity is given to humans only once in a lifetime – during first 3 years of a child's life. Many parents are simply not aware of this. A lack of attachment can lead to teenage pregnancy, suicide, alcohol or drug addiction.

Teachers can tell if children are getting quality time at home and if parents are practicing attachment games with their children. Results are visible through the child's behavior almost immediately: children are less aggressive, happier and more involved.

Many parents are familiar with baby massage, but Child Connection techniques are different. Our focus is on playing with children. Our games engage child and parent, or child and child, or child and teacher. They all are performed with close physical contact and tell a story which engage imagination and humour.

During our 3 hours "Tiny Tots" course we present academic and scientific evidence on which the importance of touch for child development is based. Give early childhood education teachers the skills and tools to be used in the daily routines of the centre, as well as materials for educating parents.

If today's parents have not learned how to create attachment and bonding skills they will not be able to pass them to their children. This is why parents' education is so important. Early learning centres as Parental Schools – why not? All ways and resources to provide children with secure attachment should be taken for consideration. These open up another avenue for children to be loved and nurtured, which benefits not only children, but all of society.

To find out more about "Tiny Tots" programme for early childhood centres, please visit:  
<http://childconnection.org.nz/tiny-tots/>

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- Sense of Smell Institute <http://www.senseofsmell.org/>

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# The Early Intervention Service

The Ministry of Education, Special Education's Early Intervention Service provides specialist support for children who have a developmental or learning delay, a disability or a behaviour or communication difficulty that impacts their ability to participate and learn at home or in an early childhood education setting. The service is available for children from birth until they start school/kura.

This support comes in the form of teams that work together alongside the child, their family/whānau and you as educators, both in the home and within early childhood education settings.

Educators and health professionals can refer a child with the parent/s' agreement or the parent/s are welcome to approach Special Education directly. You can phone your local Special Education office (under 'Education' in the blue pages of the phone book) and fill in a referral form.

When you refer a child to the Early Intervention Service it's helpful if you're able to provide information about the child's development and learning. This might be in the form of observations or assessment material that describes anything that has already been tried and proven helpful.

Depending on the child's needs, specialist support might include:

- speech-language therapists
- early intervention teachers
- psychologists
- advisers on deaf children
- kaitakawaenga (Māori cultural advisors)

Once a child has been referred staff will make contact with the family/whānau and referrer to gather further information. Then you, the parent/s and the rest of the team will meet to develop an Individual Plan using information from the assessment report.

Contact your local Special Education office, or call the Special Education information line on 0800 622 222 for more information.

## The Incredible Years programme for teachers of younger children

The Incredible Years programme helps reduce challenging behaviours in children and increases their social and self-control skills. If you have children with challenging behaviour in your early childhood setting, the Incredible Years Teacher programme will:

- provide you with strategies to help improve the way things are managed in your early childhood setting
- help you promote pro-social behaviour in children
- help you reduce a child's aggression and non-cooperation with their peers and teachers.

Contact Special Education to learn more about the Incredible Years programme.

### Tips from the Positive Behaviour for learning website:

Look at what you can do to make your centre a stimulating, supportive and well managed learning space where positive behaviour can thrive.

- Build caring relationships with children. Respect what each one brings to the centre (from home, their culture and peers). Allow the experiences of the child to be recognised in the centre.
- Have high expectations of all children (be sure they are achievable).
- He moana pupuke ka ekengia e te waka – a choppy sea can be navigated. Have belief and faith that children and young people can grow and learn new strategies and behaviour.
- Be flexible, adjust the programme and use a range of learning strategies.
- Use a range of interactions – instruction, monitoring, coaching, recognition, feedback, feed-forward and individual and group interactions.
- Anticipate issues, plan and improvise.

### Useful websites:

Ministry of Education/Special Education:  
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation.aspx>

Site for early childhood educators of children or young people with special education needs:  
<http://seonline.tki.org.nz/>

Course on Autism:  
<http://www.inclusive.org.nz/tips>

Positive Behaviour for Learning:  
<http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/>

The Incredible Years website:  
<http://www.incredibleyears.com/>

(Articles sourced from the Ministry of Education)



Perky and his Chicks by Michelle Osment

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# When Board Members Step Over the Line

How do you successfully deal with Board Members stepping in and dealing directly with centre operational staff and disputing the decisions of the Centre Manager?

- Have you ever had the situation where Board Members have tried to directly instruct staff, or have questioned Centre Manager decisions outside of the Board meeting, or have taken partial control of staff functions?
- Have you viewed this as appropriate and advantageous to the centre, or disruptive, annoying and interfering? Or both, depending on the situation?

I have come across this quite often when working with community-based childcare centre Boards and Centre Managers. I have had late night telephone calls from Board Members and Centre Managers regarding their concern about management techniques, asking advice about what the Board member should do if management isn't doing what the Board Member expects. I have been involved in emergency meetings with Centre Managers when they are ready to resign because a Board Member has been "interfering". I have seen numerous e-mails where Centre Managers complain bitterly about the Board becoming involved in "operational" matters. I have talked with many Boards about their concern that management is not managing. And the list goes on.

These situations are not always a clear case of inappropriate interference by the Board or Board Members.

On the one hand, Board Members have the right to have access to everything that goes on in the centre (with some exceptions mainly related to privacy laws), as in the end, the Board Member is ultimately responsible. It is also appropriate, prudent, and necessary that a Board Member take an interest in the operations and management of the centre, and that they have conversations with staff and ask questions outside of Board meetings.

On the other hand, the Board Members are not staff, and have not been retained to develop operational implementation of strategy. Board Members seldom have the specific skill sets required to implement the operational strategies, which is why skilled staff have been hired.

So, what can be done to intertwine the Board Members' need for knowledge and accountability, and the Centre Manager and staff need for operational autonomy to do the job they were hired for?

The most common causes for these types of situations revolve around Board Members and staff who do not understand the rights and responsibilities of Board Members. Board Members have no specific rights as individuals, other than to receive all Board information, attend all Board meetings, and have access to past Board papers. They have no individual power to tell staff what to do, including the Centre Manager. The power comes from the collective nature of the Board as whole, not individual members. The Board can direct, but individual members cannot.

I have also been involved in situations where staff were using the well-tried strategy of "that's operational, nothing to do with the Board, stay out of it". This is used sometimes to ensure that Board Members are not asking embarrassing questions, or are not getting too involved in what is seen as the domain of the Centre Manager.

Here are some strategies that will be useful in achieving a balance of Board Members' rights to know and their accountability, and staff rights to get on with the job and be held accountable for performance.

1. Have a Board Governance Manual that specifies these relationships. The best Board Governance Manual include sections such as Purpose of the Manual, Purpose of the Board, Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members, Membership and term of Board, Relationship of Board and Centre Manager, Board Culture and Reporting Requirements. Ensure that all Board members and staff have a copy. The ECC offers its members templates of Governance Manuals and policies.
2. Have a Standards of Conduct document for Board Members that specify their personal standards as Board Members. This forms the basis for any discussion to be had regarding an individual Board Member's behaviour.



By Peter Reynolds

3. Ensure that the strategic plan is the filter behind Board decisions, and that Board Members use the strategic plan as their main guidance for decisions and conduct at and between Board meetings. Make sure staff work in this manner, and any approach by a Board Member to a staff member is in context of the strategic plan (this assumes you have one).
4. Conduct Board evaluations, where Board Members rate their performance as a Board.
5. Develop in-committee sessions of the Board, where the Board meet without any staff present, where matters confidential to the Board at the governance level can be freely discussed.
6. Instruct all staff that if a Board Member approaches them, that the staff member report to the Centre Manager that this has occurred, and that the staff member instruct the Board Member that they will pass the request on to the Centre Manager.
7. Board Members have the right to conduct independent investigations and seek knowledge outside of the Board room, but they have no right to instruct staff in any manner. Remind the Board Member of this.

**Peter Reynolds is the Chief Executive Officer of the Early Childhood Council and hosts its Centre Manager Professional Development Workshops on such topics as "Governance and Strategic Planning", "Planning for Success (Business Planning)", and "Managing People". He has and continues to sit on a number of Boards of not-for-profit and commercial enterprises.**

**To find out more about the above workshops go to the Early Childhood Council's website: [www.ecc.org.nz](http://www.ecc.org.nz), under events/workshop series/for centre managers to find when these workshops are available next in your area. Peter is also prepared to host in-house workshops. To find out more contact Trudi: [info@ecc.org.nz](mailto:info@ecc.org.nz)**



# Staff - Appraisals versus Performance Development Review



By Peter Reynolds

Centres are required under the Ministry of Education's Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres (2008) to have a suitable appraisal system (GMA7). Most centres have some type of employee appraisal or review system but many do not appreciate the shortcomings of these systems.

The question I am posing is "What is the difference between Appraisal systems and Performance Development Review". I am also calling for a change in both language and expectation from government in what to expect of early childhood education centres.

The following is a breakdown of the major differences between the two approaches:

## Traditional Appraisal Systems

### Definition

Appraisal systems were the precursor to today's Performance Development Review approach. Appraisal systems are:

- a) typically based on a (one-sided) review of how a person completed their job for the year
- b) sometimes a pay review
- c) sometimes a review for bonuses
- d) sometimes an assessment of the employee for promotion
- e) typically conducted annually or less frequently
- f) typically paper based where Centre Manager is the custodian of the information. Otherwise, they are conducted less formally and without any documentation.

### Typical Outcomes

Annual appraisals are viewed by staff and centre management as a difficult and highly stressful process. The annual appraisal is:

- High Stress
- Low Confidence
- About the employee rather than their performance and development
- Not about the future
- Irrelevant

- No Alignment with performance period
- Low Visibility
- Limited contribution to centre and personal development planning
- Not Linked to Succession Planning
- Broken Compliance with Ministry or ERO

## Performance Development Review

### Definition

Performance Development Review approaches typically are:

- a) a definition of what you want an employee to do for the next performance period. The definition takes the form of specific objectives for the performance period, backed up by a job description which takes into account the normal expectations for that position
- b) a review of the personal development objectives
- c) performed quarterly, or half yearly, or annually
- d) supported by more frequent and less formal catch-up meetings that review performance against the goals and objectives
- e) where the information is accessible to all participants at any time
- f) content rich
- g) can be fully automated.

Performance Development Review approaches do not typically include remuneration reviews, thus removing the obstacle of whether an increase in pay is warranted. This remuneration review takes place separately and is best to consider two independent factors:

- i. any movement in the wage rate for the sector or as a result of economic changes (Labour Cost Index is a useful tool for this - see [www.statisticsnz.govt.nz](http://www.statisticsnz.govt.nz))
- ii. whether an employee's role has changed significantly
- iii. whether that employee's performance in their role is

significantly and consistently higher than the performance expectations (results of the Performance Development Review for the previous year).

### Typical Outcomes

- Lower stress
- Moderate to high levels of confidence
- Focused on performance
- Aligned to the centre plan
- Relevant
- High visibility
- Supports compliance

### Research

Several research studies have taken place over the last ten years or so on Performance Development approaches. Following is a summary of the findings:

- 87% of organisations were found to have some type of appraisal system
- Of the 87% that have these systems, 95% were manual systems without performance objectives or individual development plans
- 68% were annual appraisal systems

It was clear from the research that many organisations are failing to obtain the full benefit of a more inclusive Performance Development Review approach.

### Why is this an issue for Government?

Government has a leadership role in early childhood education (ECE) service delivery in New Zealand through legislation, regulations and policy. That leadership role should reflect best practice wherever possible if it is the government's desire to promote a high-quality ECE sector.

The government's own "Better Public Services" goal includes "Delivering Better Results" by increasing participation in (quality) ECE services. I would argue that "better public services" includes those services demonstrating best practice.

It is, however, an issue for the sector to implement, not government.

## Summary

The major benefits Performance Development Review systems compared to appraisal systems are:

- Part of a total approach conducted more frequently than annual appraisals
- Objectives are aligned to strategic or operational plans
- Tighter structure and easily demonstrate compliance
- Focuses staff on their performance against agreed individual development objectives, development goals and business objectives
- Accessible by everyone throughout the year
- Enables both centre managers and staff to come better prepared for reviews
- Lower stress and increased confidence of both parties
- Increases staff engagement as they are recognised for their efforts and receive meaningful development

Advances in human resource management and behavioural management theory have

enabled centres to move from an appraisal approach to a Performance Development Review approach. Appraisal systems are currently the norm in most centres as they have not yet adopted the Performance Development Review approach. This change is essential to drive up the quality of ECE services in our sector and should be fully supported by the Ministry of Education and other government agencies in our sector (especially ERO and the New Zealand Teachers Council).

The Low adoption rate of automated systems is changing fast. Demand is also high for automated systems that are simple to use, quick to deploy and inexpensive.

### About the Author

**Peter Reynolds is the Chief Executive Officer of the Early Childhood Council (ECC). Peter has been involved historically in the design and implementation of Performance Development Review systems in three large organisations and has trained management staff in how such systems work. The ECC has recently published a paper-based Performance Development Review approach on its website for**

**members. The ECC also offers half-day workshops to members and non-members alike in the use of this approach. The ECC also has a project underway to develop an on-line model for Performance Development Reviews for its membership.**

**Go to [www.ecc.org.nz](http://www.ecc.org.nz) for more information.**

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# Four Great Outlook Tips

By Debbie Mayo-Smith

Working in Outlook probably gobbles up several hours of your week and is a major pain point. Right? Unfortunately you can't ignore it. It's where you receive communications from the Ministry, from staff, parents, and enquiries. It is where you get news. It is where you set your appointments and meetings. If that's not enough, the change to the ribbon format in 2007 and 2010 changed everything that was familiar.

Here are four out of hundreds of tips from my new book *Conquer Your Email Overload*. They'll help you work more effectively both easing your pain and enhancing your gain.

I've taken my ten years of learning, and put it into a very easy to read book. It's in a problem/solution format that focuses on where you'd like to improve most; in communication, sales, workflow, response management, customer service. Imagine accomplishing this by simply making a few simple tweaks to the way you work.

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### 1. Forget typing details: Drag and Drop

You'll love this tip! Used creatively drag and drop can replace cut and paste and typing from scratch.

Take incoming email and drag into contacts, calendar, or task folders to transform that email into a new item. An email dropped into Contacts creates a new contact for the sender. Take their signature, drag and drop the information into the respective contact fields. Even better, you can highlight text within an email and drag and drop that instead of the entire email.

**Where:** Anywhere within Outlook

### 2. Your personal inbox secretary: Rules

This function used cleverly can save you **at least** 15 minutes a day – 2 weeks a year. It can automatically read your incoming or outgoing emails, then perform the tasks you set.

A perfect example is to look for unique words – such as job numbers and have them put into a folder automatically. Use Rules to bundle CC's and BCC's; Put newsletters in a folder. It can forward, answer, delete. When you have rules perform routine responses you can automatically sort through irrelevant emails and focus on important ones.

**Where:** 2003-7: Tools>Rules; 2010: Home Ribbon > Move> Rules.

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**DEBBIE MAYO-SMITH**

### 3. Be a Sales/Customer Service Superstar: Tasks.

Instead of a simple current to-do list, use Tasks to grow your client base by reminding yourself to follow up on outstanding proposals. Build relationships using recurring tasks to prompt you to telephone quarterly; to follow up after a certain period of time for customer service. Assign meeting action points to individuals and prompt them. Remind staff of items due like expense or sales reports.

**Where:** Icon under your Sent items folder

### 4. CRM Tool: People Pane

New to 2010. Microsoft has replicated the information you would normally find in a Contact's Activity tab (2003/2007) and placed it in a new pane at the bottom of an email when viewed in the Reading Pane.

You see all the activity you have had with that person, including Emails, Tasks, Calendar items and attachments.

**Where:** On the View tab, in the People Pane group, click People Pane and then click Bottom (you must have your Reading Pane turned on).

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# Resource Reviews

Reviewed by Lynette Radue, Ann Barrowclough, Amanda Turnbull, Elizabeth Clements, Trudi Sutcliffe



## Tractor

### - Touch and Feel Board Book

DK Publishing/Puffin

This board book is perfect for young toddlers, especially boys whose eyes light up when they see big wheeled vehicles and is a good introduction to those toddlers who would rather play with tractors than listen to stories. This board book encourages language

through colour, shape and textures. The tactile experiences with descriptive language include: chunky tyres, sparkly lights (the text prompts the reader to count: How many lights can you count?), sticky brown mud (it really is 'sticky') and a scratchy...

Overall a fun read encouraging readers to explore using their eyes and hands to recognise and name objects. TS



## Fire Engine

### - Touch and Feel Board Book

DK Publishing/Puffin

A board book for those young toddlers who squeal in delight when they see or hear the 'Big Red Engine'. A unique interactive

tactile experience, from the scratchy grill, the smooth leathery tyres, and the shiny metal bumper (where a child will be able to see their reflection). This sturdy book reinforces primary learning skills through sensory perception. You can't go wrong having this book in your under two centre. TS



## Baby Animals

### - Touch and Feel Board Book

DK Publishing/Puffin

This touch and feel novelty board book for young children/toddlers features full-colour photographs of a range of animals accompanied by tactile experiences such as

the soft baby rabbit hair, the leathery ears on a baby elephant, fluffy yellow ducklings, smooth velvety calves and the gorgeous photo of the furry baby gorilla (sure to be a favourite page). A tough and sturdy book that will encourage young toddlers to learn various animal names, improve language and a perfect book for both reading together and exploring alone. TS

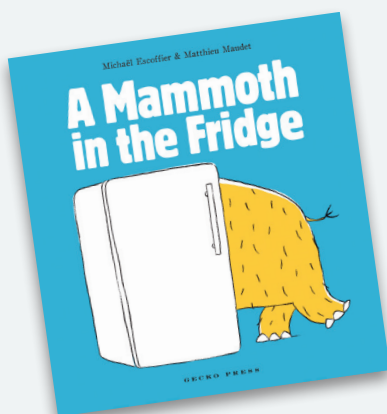
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## A Mammoth in the Fridge

**Gecko Press**

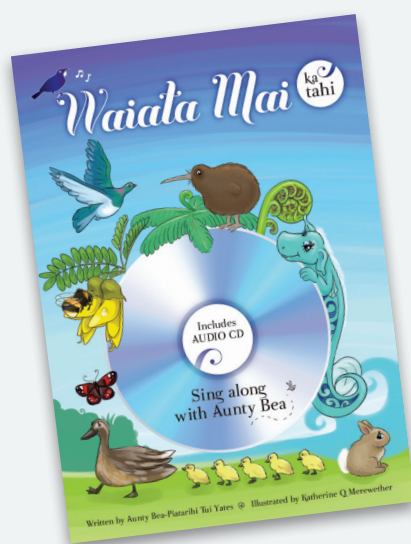
**Michael Escoffier**

**Matthieu Maudet**

A family is surprised to find a mammoth in the fridge. When the fire brigade arrives to help, the mammoth escapes outside to a tree. Efforts fail to coax the mammoth down. What happens next is unexpected. The little girl of the family coaxes the mammoth down from the tree and they both quietly creep back into the house. Turn the page and see a big surprise when the little girl takes the mammoth into her bedroom!

This book is a good shared reading book as it provides opportunities to teach children pre-reading skills. The words on each page

have been kept to the minimum which gives the reader the chance to allow child participation in the story telling. Questions such as "How do you think you could get the mammoth down from the tree?" and "What do you think will happen next?" can be asked to stimulate the child's imagination, discussion and predictive thinking. Teachers can also encourage the child's voice by asking them to make the fire engine sound or to count up to three as the fridge door is opened. This is a story with a difference that would appeal to great imaginations but at the same time needs to be appreciated for the opportunities it provides for child participation in shared reading. Making this book into a big book would allow for big group shared reading opportunities that would also be valuable. LR



## Waiata Mai

**Aunty Bea-Piatarahi Tui Yates**

**Kat Q. Merewether**

**Aunty Bea Publishing**

For teachers looking for a CD of Māori songs to add to their collection, this one by Aunty Bea-Piatarahi Tui Yates is worth purchasing. Aunty Bea sings along with her guitar giving us a collection of Māori songs some of which are nursery rhymes that are well known in English. Aunty Bea has an easy to listen to voice and it wouldn't take long for children to sing along with

her. The book has the words to the songs as well as lovely illustrations on every page. Track 1 and track 10 are a collection of songs that flow from one to the next. This adds something a little different for teachers to use for mat times by teaching the children a medley of waiata. Some of the songs should be well known by early childhood teachers. For those that are less familiar, the words in the book are easy to follow. The colourful illustrations on each page, which include a taniwha, pukeko and the New Zealand flag, make this a great book to share with children as they learn the songs. LR



## One Day a Taniwha

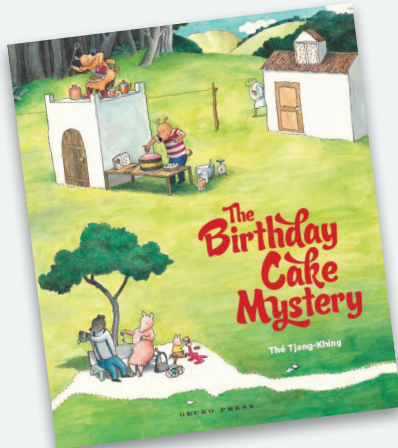
**Beatrice Piatarahi Tui Yates**

**Katherine Quin Merewether**

The first thing that drew my attention to this book, was the stunning illustrations and colours. It is the story of The Taniwha, which is a well-known song taught in early childhood schools. The narrator of the story is "Aunty Bea" who has written and published many stories on the inspiration of her grandchildren. The book comes with

CD which includes a narration in English and Māori, together with waiata in English and Māori. There is also an illustration of the Taniwha at the back of the book which outlines the different parts of the Taniwha's body in Te Reo Māori which is a useful learning tool.

I would highly recommend this book to all early childhood centres as it is a truly bicultural piece of work. It would be suitable for ages 18 months upward. AT



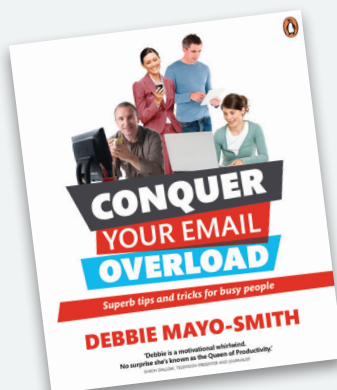
## The Birthday Cake Mystery

**Thé Tjong-Khing**

**Gecko Press**

Written by Indonesian Dutch award winning writer-illustrator Thé Tjong-Khing, this wordless book is a detective story filled with numerous sub-plots, humorous details and red herrings. Before being shared with children this book needs to be gone through first by an adult to identify the clues and see the plot unfold. I recommend that the adult 'reads' the book alongside a small group of 4-5 children – cueing them as you go through the book. It is not a book that lends itself to mat-time. The story begins on the cover starting

on the left hand side (back cover). Part of the front cover is repeated on the title page and is part of the story. Some useful cue questions the adult might ask are on the back cover. Three and four year old children who helped this reviewer 'read' the book thoroughly enjoyed following the actions of the different characters, searching for clues and seeing the plot unfold. All said they would enjoy reading it by themselves if the book was in their room. I think a pre-schooler who did not have any idea what the book was about would have difficulty with it. However I fully recommend it with the proviso that some adult input is needed for the children to fully enjoy it. AB



## Conquer Your Email Overload – Super tips and tricks for busy people

**Debbie Mayo-Smith**

**Penguin Books**

This handy little book introduces you to Outlook 2010 and is a useful reminder of how to save time on any Outlook system. Learn how to deal efficiently with Spam, how to organise your Inbox so you don't feel overwhelmed, how to get rid of spam, how to put a signature on your email ... and much, much more.

Many early childhood centres will find the section on using Contacts for

marketing useful and there are some useful tips for those of you who send out newsletters by email.

Of course, Outlook is not only about email. Outlook 2010 allows you to develop social networks, to keep your diary on line, share it with staff or others and to manage your tasks.

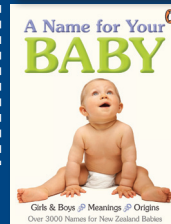
Debbie's books are clearly laid out so you can easily find a section on the issue you have. Her instructions are easy to follow and they work! Keep this book by your computer and once a week give yourself a treat – learn a new email trick to save yourself endless time and frustration.



## A PUFFIN PRIZE PACK!

To win a free pack of Puffin books answer this question:  
**Which board book will a child be able to see their reflection in?**

Email your contact details and the answer to the question above to [info@ecc.org.nz](mailto:info@ecc.org.nz) by Monday 8 October 2012 and be in to win!



**Puffin has kindly donated  
FIVE prize packs, each  
containing FIVE books!**

### Puffin Competition Winners

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

Alexandra Goodwin, Bronwyn's Place, Yvonne Smith  
Margaret Grubb, Oasis Education







# LAST LAUGH

## No wonder English is so hard to learn!

The soldier decided to desert in the desert.  
 The present is a good time to present the present.  
 The dove dove into the bushes.  
 I did not object to the object.  
 The insurance for the invalid was invalid.  
 The bandage was wound around the wound.  
 There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.  
 They were too close to the door to close it.  
 The wind was too strong to wind the sail.  
 I shed a tear when I saw the tear in my clothes.  
 I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.  
 How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?  
 I spent last evening evening out a pile of dirt.

There was a man who entered a local paper's pun contest. He sent in ten different puns, in the hope that at least one of the puns would win. Unfortunately, no pun in ten did.

**TEACHER:** Maria, go to the map and find North America.

**MARIA:** Here it is.

**TEACHER:** Correct. Now class, who discovered America?

**CLASS:** Maria.

**TEACHER:** Glen, why do you always get so dirty?

**GLEN:** Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are.

**TEACHER:** Clyde, your composition on 'My Dog' is exactly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his?

**CLYDE:** No, teacher, it's the same dog.

**TEACHER:** Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

**HAROLD:** A teacher.

## Eight Things You'll Never Hear a Teacher Say

1. "Our manager is soooooooooo smart. No wonder he's in administration!"
2. "Thank goodness for these evaluations. They keep me focused."
3. "I can't BELIEVE I get paid for this!!!!"
4. "I bet all the people in our administration really miss teaching!!"
5. "Gosh, the bathroom smells so fresh and clean!"
6. "It's Friday already???????"
7. This in-service training has just been fabulous.
8. I believe that athletics are not getting enough money.



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# Naturally Wood Playgrounds

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

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



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



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



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



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

## NaturallyWood by design

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



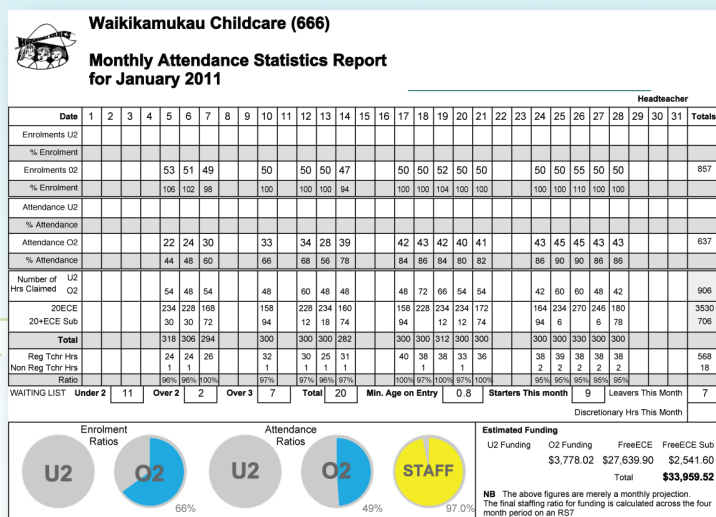
# FirstBase



## Administration Software for NZ Early Childhood

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

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



JANUARY 2011										Service No. 666		
Subsidy Funded Child Hours					20-ECE Funded Child Hours					Staff Hour Count		
		Under 2		Over 2			20ECE Hours		Plus 10 Hours	ECE Qualified and Registered		
										Yes		No
Sat	1				Sat	1				Sat	1	
Sun	2				Sun	2				Sun	2	
Mon	3				Mon	3				Mon	3	
Tue	4				Tue	4				Tue	4	
Wed	5			54	Wed	5	234		30	Wed	5	24
Thu	6			48	Thu	6	228		30	Thu	6	24
Fri	7			54	Fri	7	168		72	Fri	7	26
Sat	8				Sat	8				Sat	8	
Sun	9				Sun	9				Sun	9	
Mon	10			48	Mon	10	158		94	Mon	10	32
Tue	11				Tue	11				Tue	11	
Wed	12			60	Wed	12	228		12	Wed	12	30
Thu	13			48	Thu	13	224		18	Thu	13	25
Fri	14			48	Fri	14	160		24	Fri	14	31
Sat	15				Sat	15				Sat	15	
Sun	16				Sun	16				Sun	16	
Mon	17			48	Mon	17	158		94	Mon	17	40
Tue	18			72	Tue	18	228			Tue	18	38
Wed	19			66	Wed	19	224		12	Wed	19	38
Thu	20			54	Thu	20	234		12	Thu	20	33
Fri	21			54	Fri	21	172		24	Fri	21	36
Sat	22				Sat	22				Sat	22	
Sun	23				Sun	23				Sun	23	
Mon	24			42	Mon	24	164		94	Mon	24	38
Tue	25			60	Tue	25	234		6	Tue	25	39
Wed	26			60	Wed	26	270			Wed	26	38
Thu	27			48	Thu	27	246		6	Thu	27	38
Fri	28			42	Fri	28	180		78	Fri	28	38
Sat	29				Sat	29				Sat	29	
Sun	30				Sun	30				Sun	30	
Mon	31				Mon	31				Mon	31	
906					3530					706		
										568		
										18		

**Teacher Registration Targets: Numbers of Teaching Staff**

This question refers to all teaching staff usually employed in your service to deliver education and care programmes during the week Monday, 6th December - Friday, 10th December 2010. This question is used for statistical purposes only and does not impact upon funding. You should count part-time and full-time teachers, and you should include the Person(s) Responsible. You should not count day-to-day relievers, nor any staff not directly involved with teaching children.

How many teaching staff (as a number) are:	ECE Qualified	Non ECE Qualified	Total
Registered Teachers? (that is, holders of current Practising Certificates)	6		6
Unregistered Teachers? (that is, are not holders of current Practising Certificates)		2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	

**Number of Children**

How many children claimed in your service during the week of Mon 6 December 2010 to Fri 10 December 2010. Only count each child once during this week

Subsidy Funding		20 Hours ECE		
Under 2	2 & Over Nor receiving 20 ECE	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years
	14	34	24	2

Printed from FirstBase on 14 Feb 2011

The software is fully networkable & is available for Windows & Mac users. FirstBase is already in use in hundreds of centres and kindergartens. It maximises your funding, and handles even most taxing setups.

**Skagerrak Software**

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