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BRIDGING THE DISCONNECTION BETWEEN TEACHING & LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Inside this issue...

Swings & Roundabouts
September 2015

7 FROM THE EDITOR
8 CEO’S MESSAGE
9 VULNERABLE CHILDREN ACT 2014
14 SO YOU KNOW
16 CURRICULUM

THE CHALLENGES OF CURRICULUM:
THE FUTURE OF TE WHĀRIKI
BRIDGING THE DISCONNECTION BETWEEN TEACHING
AND OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN’S LEARNING
CULTURAL MODELS IN ECE
MAGIC KINGDOM EXPERIMENTS WITH
DIGITAL LEARNING AND FEEDBACK

23 PREFERRED SUPPLIERS SECTION
29 MANAGEMENT
STRATEGICALLY EXITING A BUSINESS
INNOVATION IN ECE - HOW TO REALLY STAND OUT

32 ECC
MEET THE NEW ECC PRESIDENT
MEET THE ECC’S EXECUTIVE

37 HEALTH & SAFETY
WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY LAWS
CHOOSING PLAYGROUND SURFACING

42 RESOURCE REVIEWS
46 LAST LAUGH

Applications for advertising in Swings & Roundabouts will be considered from the following:
1) Early childhood centres and/or their associated management groups that are members of the Early Childhood Council.
2) Trade and service suppliers to the early childhood industry.
3) Government and not-for-profit organisations.

Please note: Some industries may be restricted due to exclusive arrangements with the Early Childhood Council.

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For further information, Call us on 0800 742 742; or e-mail information@ecc.org.nz or go to www.ecc.org.nz to complete an application form.
In the winter issue of Spring & Roundabouts, Professor Anne Smith wrote an article on the enduring legacy of Te Whāriki. This thought-provoking article encouraged much debate among many of you. So to continue this discussion and to get you thinking about your own practice and the future of our current ECE Curriculum, we have two more articles under this theme. First up is Professor Claire McLachlan who leads the Early Years Education programme at Massey University. Claire shares her own research findings that suggest teachers are using Te Whāriki as a broad guide, rather than for specific curriculum planning. Claire shares her personal view on whether Te Whāriki should be updated and how there needs to be better support and guidance for teachers under the areas of assessment and planning.

Alongside Claire’s article are inspirED ECE professional learning Directors and Lead facilitators, Barbara Watson and Bridgit Williams article, who also share similar ideas and research on how to bridge the disconnection between teaching and outcomes for children’s learning. They propose some possible explanations on why there is disconnection and offer ideas on how to bridge the gap between what teachers do and what we want children to learn.

Also in this issue you have the opportunity to meet the Early Childhood Council’s Executive who were voted in at the latest ECC AGM at this years ECC Conference in May. This includes a comprehensive interview with the new President Theresa Dodds. Read what Theresa’s direction is for the ECC, the biggest challenge to ECE centres and what inspires her own leadership.

In the middle of this issue we showcase some of the ECC’s Preferred Suppliers and how they can benefit your service/business, especially if you are an ECC member. If you’re not a member, you may be missing out on some great discounts and services. You can find out more about what is on offer from our Preferred Suppliers on the ECC’s website: www.ecc.org.nz or give the ECC a ring, 0800 742 742 and talk to their friendly and always helpful staff.

Also in this issue you will find a range of articles including how the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and upcoming changes to workplace health and safety laws may affect your services and current policies. Plus find out what new literacy is proving popular for one centre. Plus, Phil Sales offers some suggestions on what you can do to make your ECE centre stand out amongst the many.

Themes in upcoming issues include:

- Embracing bicultural practices in ECE
- Value of leadership training for all teachers
- Respective Practice
- Transitions
- Innovative indoor spaces

If you’d like to write on any of the above topics or any ECE/business topic or issue, please contact Trudi, publications@ecc.org.nz

Thank you to all those who participated in this issue of Swings & Roundabouts.

Trudi Sutcliffe
Editor

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(* CPD = Continuous Professional Development)
July 1st has seen the implementation of the Vulnerable Children Act, and as is the case with major change like this, the ECC has been travelling around the country to brief member centres and others on the impact the Act has on childcare centres.

The Vulnerable Children Act became law on the first of July, and as we do with major change like this, the ECC has been travelling the country to brief both member centres and others on how the Act impacts childcare services.

The Vulnerable Children Act is essential legislation. New Zealand has an unacceptable history of abuse against children, and we see ongoing examples in news media much too often. The Early Childhood Council therefore welcomes legislation that makes key government agencies jointly accountable for protecting children, and requires government-funded providers to have child protection policies.

This protection of children is essential for childcare centres, and for more than one reason. Most parents choose a centre having been satisfied their child will be safe. If this is in doubt, parents vote with their feet and go elsewhere. Centres already subject their staff to Police vet checks therefore - not just because it’s the right thing to do and existing Ministry of Education licensing criteria require it, but because it makes business sense. This is why the Vulnerable Children Act is, for our sector, simply a matter of ’adjusting’ existing ECE centre policies and is supported widely.

Why then this editorial?

Having facilitated, for centres all over New Zealand, about a dozen briefing sessions on the impact of the Vulnerable Children Act, I can report that on every occasion managers expressed concern about delays in Police vetting processes. This is the problem: the increased demand for Police vetting created by the Vulnerable Children Act has not been matched by increased capacity to undertake that vetting. This is unforgivable given the intent of the legislation to protect children, and is creating hopelessly long waiting times. Sure, I have some sympathy for the Police vet team given the tidal wave of requests they are facing. (I’m advised they have around 60,000 vet requests waiting a response currently.) But I lose that sympathy when reminded that both government and Police have had more than 12 months to prepare for this.

There are other problems also. Such as inconsistency in policy implementation by different branches of government. The Police vet website, for example, tells centres they should hold on to a vet report for no more than three months; but the Ministry of Education and ERO penalise centres that do not have vet reports on hand for three years.

There is also inconsistency in vetting requirements between the Vulnerable Children Act and other Ministry of Education regulations. And while the Ministry has signalled its intention to revise its rules, it would have been good to have the ‘ducks lined up’.

Finally, there is this: the Vulnerable Children Act makes clear that responsibility for child safety rests with the employer. The Ministry of Education, however, tells centres they can accept as a proxy for a ’clean’ police vet check, a teacher’s current practicing certificate. This is because the Education Council (formerly the Teachers Council) uses Police vet reports to assess whether teachers meet the requirements to practice. The problem is that the Education Council’s review of a Police vet report cannot take into account all the factors an employer must consider in making a decision to employ. And brings into question the wisdom of centre managers accepting teachers’ practicing certificates as proxies for clean Police vet reports.

The Teachers Council (now the Education Council), for example, has confirmed there are occasions when it receives a Police vet report containing notes about suspected illegal activity and cautions given – but not convictions. In these circumstances, the team at the Education Council assesses the information and decides whether or not to award a practicing certificate, and whether or not to impose special conditions.

This is, I believe, good reason to consider critically Ministry of Education advice that centre managers should use a teacher’s practicing certificate as proxy for a ’clean’ Police vet report. In these circumstances, some centre managers will, I think, accept the risks and some will not. Those uncomfortable with teacher practicing certificates as proxies for Police vets are, however, likely to face long waiting times to get vets of their own undertaken.

There is a solution to this problem that the ECC is exploring currently with the Education Council - that teachers be permitted to request (under the Privacy Act) that the Education Council release Police vet reports to employers. This solution would avert the need for two vet reports on the same person. It would reduce the workload on Police staff charged with processing vets. It would speed up employment processes. And it would give employers the detailed information they require. We are hoping currently that the Education Council will help us out with this one, and that common sense will prevail.

In conclusion, while I expect government officials to create ‘refinements’ that will make the Vulnerable Children Act more workable, it remains regrettable that we face so many avoidable problems. It could have been very different: if the government agencies had worked more closely together and done a better job of considering potential problems from the viewpoint of ECE managers impacted by the new rules.

For further information on the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and ‘Safety Checking’ read the following pages.

By Peter Reynolds
On 1 July 2014 the Vulnerable Children Act and other associated legislation passed into law. The Act forms a significant part of comprehensive measures to protect and improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children and strengthen our child protection system. The reforms were proposed in the White Paper for Vulnerable Children and the Children’s Action Plan, which were released in October 2012 after significant consultation with the public that resulted in almost 10,000 submissions.

For the first time, five chief executives of government agencies are jointly accountable for acting together to develop and implement a plan to protect our children from harm, working with families/whānau and communities. NZ Police and the Ministries of Health, Education, Justice, and Social Development have new, legislated responsibilities.

A number of measures have been enacted to keep our children safe. These include standard safety checking for paid staff in the government-funded children’s workforce, people with serious convictions will be prohibited from working closely with children unless they are granted an exemption, the development of core competencies for the children’s workforce, and new requirements for government agencies and their funded providers to have child protection policies.

The Vulnerable Children Act, and two other related Acts amending the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act and the Kiwi Saver Act, was developed by a multi-agency team of officials from the Vulnerable Children’s Board group of agencies. The measures in the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 contribute to the Government’s Better Public Services result to reduce the number of physical assaults on children.

In time these workforce changes will affect around 370,000 people in the children’s workforce.

The legislative changes are being phased in over several years, together with associated Children’s Action Plan initiatives. These include the establishment of Children’s teams regionally. There are now four Children’s Teams up and running; Rotorua, Whangarei, Horowhenua/Otaki and Marlborough. Six more are planned by the end of 2015; Hamilton, Eastern Bay of Plenty, Tairawhiti, Whangarei, Clendon/Mahurewa/Papakura and Christchurch.

Children’s teams are a new way of working with families/whānau. They bring together professionals from iwi/Māori health, education, welfare and social service agencies to work with children, and their families. Trained people in the community refer children to local professionals who work with families/whānau to help and support the child.

Children removed from their parents due to severe abuse and neglect will be placed with Home for Life carers who can provide a safe, stable home. The changes will stop those who seek to destabilise the new home with vexatious court proceedings, or by disrupting the carers’ day-to-day care or guardianship responsibilities to the extent that the child’s welfare is threatened.

Altogether, the changes provide a framework for professionals from the different sectors to work better together to help children. By breaking down the barriers to information sharing and cross-sector working, and brokering more targeted service provision.

These changes are about a better life for the most vulnerable children in New Zealand.

What does the Act introduce?

- Requirement to have child protection policies in place.
- Safety checks for people working with children.
- Parents who seriously abuse or even kill children will have to prove they are safe to parent if they go on to have another child.
- Courts can now curtail and define guardianship rights of birth parents in extreme cases.

What does this mean for those working in ECE?

- There are two key requirements for ECE centres under the Vulnerable Children Act. All ECE centres must:
  - have a child protection policy, and
  - safety check workers
- The child protection policy must be put in place as soon as possible.
- The safety checking requirements are being phased in from 1 July 2015. New core workers are the first to be affected.

Core and Non-core Workers

As the employer you need to decide whether the children’s worker providing educational services appointed to the position you are filling will:

- work alone with children, OR
- have primary responsibility or authority over children
- If either of these applies then the position you are filling is a core children’s worker.

Under the new legislation, you as the employer are responsible for determining whether the role is a core children’s worker or not.

For ECE services and kōhanga reo, most staff who have access to children would be considered a core worker, as there will be times during the day when their duties require them to have primary responsibility for, or authority over, children.

There may be some positions where staff providing education services will never be alone with children. If the person you are employing will NOT work alone with, or have primary responsibility or authority over, children then the position you are filling is a non-core children’s worker.

A non-core worker would include staff whose main duties do not require them to have primary responsibility for, or authority over, children, but whose work may include having access to children. For example,
non-teaching staff such as administrative or kitchen staff.

If you employ someone as a non-core children’s worker then you are responsible for making sure that person isn’t permitted to be alone with or have primary responsibility or authority over children in the course of their work.

To keep your students and staff safe, it is advised that if you are in any doubt you treat the position as a core children’s worker.

### Child Protection Policy

For many services working with children, they are in the process of developing child protection policies. The ECE sector is fortunately ahead of much of the children’s workforce in this space as they are already required by legislation to have a child protection policy and process for responding to child abuse (HS31).

All ECE centres must have a child protection policy (asap) that meets the Vulnerable Children Act’s requirements. The policy must:

- contain provisions on the identification and reporting of neglect and abuse, and
- be written, and
- be reviewed (at least) every three years.

The Ministry of Education is currently reviewing the Licensing and Certification Criteria to align them with the Vulnerable Children Act requirements. The Childrens Action Plan directorate www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz have developed best practice guidelines for the entire children’s workforce.

The Early Childhood Council has prepared policy templates that clearly delineate between a child protection policy and a child abuse policy to assist in the implementation of criteria HS31 and the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

### Safety Checking

The new Vulnerable Children (Requirements for Safety Checking of Children’s Workers) Regulations 2015 spell out what State funded employers must do from now on to ensure employees are safe to work with children.

These new stronger safety checking regulations are part of the Children’s Action Plan to improve the lives of vulnerable children and they start being phased in from 1 July.

All ECE centres must safety check staff. This includes:

- verification of identity
- an Interview
- information about work history
- referee information
- information from EducaNZ
- a police vet report
- a risk assessment.

Different checking processes will be required for new staff, existing employees, and for updating checks that must be carried out every three years.

### Key Dates

The safety checking regulations are being phased in over time. State funded employers have three to four years to have all their existing workforce safety checked. The compliance approach will be educative for the first two or three years.

- From 1 July 2015 the requirements apply to all new core children’s workers who must be safety checked before their employment or engagement starts.
- By 1 July 2016 the requirements apply to all new non-core children’s workers who must be safety checked before their employment or engagement starts.
- By 1 July 2018 all core workers who are currently employed or engaged, and will still be employed on 1 July 2018 must have been safety checked.
- By 1 July 2019 all children’s workers who are currently employed or engaged (i.e., including non-core workers), and will still be employed on 1 July 2019 must have been safety checked.

When a safety check cannot be completed in time

The Vulnerable Children Act 2014 recognises there may be circumstances where it will not be possible to complete the full safety check before a core children’s worker starts work.

In an emergency or unexpected situation, a reliever may be engaged or employed without completing a safety check first - but for no more than 5 consecutive working days.

Ideally, another suitable (safety checked) person should be engaged or employed to work alongside the new core worker whenever they are in the presence of children until the required processes are complete.

Other things to consider if you are time bound:

- If the Police vet request cannot be completed before 1 July 2015, you may employ the person as a non-core children’s worker from 1 July 2015 until the safety checking is complete, including the Police vet. This means that until the police vet is received you will need to ensure that they do not:
  - work alone with children, OR
  - have primary responsibility or authority over children.
- Another suitable (safety checked) person may be engaged or employed to work alongside the new core worker whenever they are in the presence of children until the required processes are complete.
- Remember you can rely on the police vet undertaken as part of a teacher’s practising certificate issued in the last 3 years.
- You must obtain a Police vet if the preferred applicant is not a registered professional with a current practising certificate. You will find Vulnerable Children Act vetting request forms on the NZ Police website. These forms will prompt you to select ‘new’ rather than ‘existing’ worker. This will help properly prioritise your vetting request for a new children’s worker role.
- You must ensure the applicant is assessed for any risk to the safety of children, using their work history (CV), an interview and at least one referee check.
- If you have documented evidence the required safety check steps have been done by another organisation within the past three years, you may choose to rely upon that safety check.

More specific information can be found on the following links:

- [www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/registration-changes/VCA](http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/registration-changes/VCA)
- [www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz](http://www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz)
• We recommend that you always undertake the identity check yourself for a new worker.
• Otherwise, you must undertake all the safety checking steps yourself before employing the applicant as a core children’s worker.

Charges may still be laid in cases where the breaches are on-going or particularly serious.

There will be information available for ECE services (http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/ministry-priorities/vulnerable-children/), and services can also contact ECE.Info@education.govt.nz if they have specific questions.

Workforce Restrictions
The Vulnerable Children Act 2014 prohibits people with certain criminal convictions from working alone with children unless they have an exemption. The restrictions are specified in Schedule 2 of the Act (http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/whole.html#DLMS501909) and apply to people with convictions involving children and/or violent behaviour, including child abuse and sexual offending.

From 1 July 2015 the workforce restriction applies to new core children’s workers. This means the workforce restriction applies immediately to people with certain criminal convictions seeking new roles as core children’s workers.

From 1 July 2016, when an employer knows one of their core children’s workers has been convicted of any of the specified offences they will have to suspend the worker from all core children’s worker duties. People with specified convictions will be able to apply for an exemption.

This means that people with a conviction for a specified offence currently employed in a core worker role have until 1 July 2016 to secure a Core Worker Exemption.

How does the workforce restriction affect teachers?
From 1 July 2015 the Education Amendment Act 2015 requires the Education Council to cancel registration of a teacher where the Council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the teacher no longer satisfies the requirements for registration. This could include evidence that the teacher has been convicted of a specified conviction under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 unless an exemption has been granted.

The offences (which involve offences against children and/or violent behaviour, for example, ill-treatment or neglect of a child and sexual offending) are specified in Schedule 2 of the Act.

The Core Worker Exemption
Individuals prohibited from being employed or engaged in a core worker role under the workforce restriction can apply for a Core Worker Exemption. The process will be administered by the Ministry of Social Development on behalf of the other government agencies responsible for the Vulnerable Children Act (Ministries of Health, Education and Justice).

Applications for exemptions will be considered from 1 July 2015. Employers will be able to make an enquiry against the Core Worker Exemption register. Information for employers and employees on how to apply for an exemption is available from the Children’s Action Plan website (http://childrensactionplan.govt.nz/childrens-workforce/the-workforce-restriction/).

If an individual holds a Core Worker Exemption it is no longer against the law to employ that person as a core worker.

A Core Worker Exemption is not role-specific, so, subject to conditions, a Core Worker Exemption holder can legally be employed in any core worker role. However, it is still up to the employer to decide whether or not the Core Worker Exemption holder is suitable for the role they are applying for.

The Core Worker Exemption process is available because people can change – there may be circumstances where a person with a conviction for a specified offence may no longer pose an undue risk to the safety of children. Mitigating circumstances or rehabilitation are examples of factors that might be taken into account.

Child safety will always come first though, and the process will be a robust and fair consideration of individual circumstances.

If you have a query relating to the workforce restriction or associated Core Worker Exemption, email: Core_Worker_Exemption@msd.govt.nz or call 0800 462 511.

Risk Assessment
Although you can obtain useful information from professional bodies, from a Criminal Record, from the Police Vetting Service and other sources, the ultimate responsibility lies with you to take all reasonable steps to assess the risk that a person would pose to the safety of children.

Your final decision will be based on a collection of factors. You will want the person you employ to:
• Be a safe person to work with children.
• Understand the needs and development of children and know how to act to ensure these are met.
• Actively contribute to a culture of child protection.
• Support and adhere to the child protection policies that your organisation has established.
• Be prepared to make the safety of a child a priority.

There are likely to be a number of pieces of information that, taken a certain way, could raise concerns for you. It is your responsibility to examine that information in its proper context to come to a conclusion that is fair to the candidate and safe for the children in your organisation. You are well advised to:
• Seek outside expert advice from someone with whom you can discuss a concern or who can meet the candidate.
• Talk to more referees if the information you have is not conclusive.
• Check with the candidate anything that is unclear, inconsistent or gives you concern.

Talk to a colleague about anything that does not sit completely comfortably with you. It doesn’t hurt to listen to your ‘gut’ instinct but always work through an issue before making a decision.

Take your time before making a decision. While hiring staff can be time-consuming and expensive and the need to appoint someone can be strong, putting yourself under pressure to make an appointment means you can overlook an issue that could prove very damaging to your organisation.

Confidentiality and information sharing
The Privacy Act 1993 and the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the CYPF Act, any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected
or deprived may report the matter to Child, Youth and Family or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

- You are not obliged to breach confidentiality with parents of children in your centre without good reason.
- If you have a children’s team in your region, you are encouraged to utilise them as a support network or as a place to refer families to for extra support.

Information for ECE centres about Children’s Teams can be found on the Children’s Action Plan website.

Is that child OK?
The majority of children in New Zealand are happy, healthy and loved by their families, whānau and caregivers. However, not all children have the support and protection of a trusted adult.

Sadly, abuse and neglect of children happens a lot in New Zealand. Most people wish there was more they could do to keep kids safe. But often it all seems too hard or they’re afraid of doing the wrong thing.

Whether you’re a family or whānau member, friend, neighbour, teacher, or workmate, there are things you can do to protect children from abuse and neglect. Every action counts.

What you can do?
- If you see or hear about a child whose safety and wellbeing is in immediate danger, contact the police on 111 or Child, Youth and Family on 0508 326 459.
- If you are concerned that your safety may be put at risk by reporting and wish to remain anonymous, phone Crimestoppers NZ on 0800 555 111.
- Make sure you know what abuse and neglect are, and how to recognise the signs.
- Offer encouragement and practical support to families if you think they might be running into problems.
- If you feel worried, talk to the parent or another member of the family or whānau about your concerns.

Who else can I talk to?
- Talk to someone else who knows the family well, eg, a friend, neighbour, workmate or teacher.
- Link the family up with others who can support them.
- Talk to someone experienced, for a different point of view, or for ideas about how to help.
- Call a helpline for free, confidential advice and support:
  - Parent Help – 0800 568 856
  - Child, Youth and Family – 0508 326 459
  - Are You OK – 0800 456 450 (Family Violence Information Line).
- If you’re worried that nothing’s happening, let someone in your neighbourhood or community know, like a community worker, health worker, church leader or kaumātua from the local marae.
- Trust your judgement and keep trying until your concerns are taken seriously.

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Solace in the Wind by Max Patte. Photography by Nicola Edmonds.
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- How have childcare centre designs changed and what will the future bring?
- Was it easier to run a successful childcare business (community-owned or privately-owned) then or now?
- Do children learn more today under our guidance, or are we beating them down with “PC-ness”?

These and many other topics will be covered for both centre owners and managers, committee members and teaching staff.

Mark your diary now!
Registrations open in October!

Welcome

The following early childhood centres joined the Early Childhood Council recently:
- Jolly Stars ELC, Auckland
- Somerset ELC, Waihi
- Bright Beginnings ELC, Auckland
- Tipu Montessori, Auckland
- Te Tirahou ECE, Hastings
- Akoranga Childcare Centre, Auckland
- Aspiring Beginnings Early Learning Centre, Wanaka
- Bay of Islands Waldorf Education Trust, Kerikeri
- Casa Montessori Preschool, Auckland
- Changepoint Education Trust, Tauranga
- Shooting Stars Daycare, Auckland
- Real Kids Early Learning Limited, Auckland (Provisional member)
- Little Ants Childcare Ltd, Auckland (Provisional member)
- Piritahi Childcare, Waiheke Island (Provisional member)
- Caring Kids Childcare, Ngauruawahia (Provisional member)
- Butterbee Childcare, Auckland (Provisional member)
- Pohutukawa Preschool, Whakatane (Provisional member)

Centre Manager CPD System

The ECC’s primary role is to support early childhood education centre owners and managers to run successful centres. In line with that mission, the ECC has developed and launched a continuous professional development (CPD) system for individual centre managers.

Until now, centre managers have had little to guide them in assessing their own management professional development needs; planning to meet those needs; and a systematic way of recording PD activities to support their ongoing professional development and career objectives. Until now!

For a small annual subscription, centre managers can now access the ECC’s Centre Manager CPD System on the ECC’s website. You can download a self-review tool that will show you where your strengths are and where your PD opportunities for growth and development reside. A simple planning tool will help you to plan your PD activities for the future. And the CPD points system will enable you to record your PD activities each year.

Each PD activity attracts points. An annual benchmark gives you a guide for how much PD activity to plan for. And a peer average shows you where your own PD activity is at compared to other centre managers around the country. Finally, you can download reports to help your career planning and your own appraisal/performance reviews. PD activities do not need to be ECC events – they can be any activity that is designed to improve your centre management practice, eg: workshops, courses, reading management articles, management conferences, publishing articles, etc.

Get started now! Go to the ECC’s website, www.ecc.org.nz (under the Online Shop) for more information on the Centre Manager CPD system!
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THE CHALLENGES OF CURRICULUM:
The future of Te Whāriki

In the last volume of ‘Swings and Roundabouts’, Anne Smith commented on the enduring legacy of Te Whāriki and its special significance as one of the earliest curriculum documents for early childhood, with far reaching influence on other countries’ curricula. She also identified the curriculum’s important focus on encouraging children’s engagement in learning and having sufficient openness so children can explore without being overly constrained by curriculum goals. She commented it has not been a ‘dead document’ and has attracted a degree of controversy.

Evidence of controversy can be seen in the appointment of the “Early Years Advisory Group” in 2014 by the Minister of Education, who tasked the group with recommending “practical ways to ensure children have consistent teaching and learning from birth to eight years old, including helping teachers to implement the early childhood education curriculum” (Parata, 2014). Heka Parata also stated:

We need early childhood teachers and educators, parents and new entrant teachers working together at a time that’s critical for children developing their foundations for learning and language. The group will suggest ways to strengthen implementation of the early childhood education curriculum framework, Te Whāriki, and how we can have better planning, implementation and evaluation across the early learning and schooling sectors for the benefit of young children.

This focus does not appear to critique the document itself, although others have (Blaiklock, 2010). Instead the focus is on whether teachers can implement the curriculum, no doubt influenced by the Education Review Office report, Working with Te Whāriki (2013), which identified that many centres were struggling with implementation.

I wasn’t surprised by the ERO findings, as my own research has identified that teachers use Te Whāriki as a broad guide, rather than for the specifics of curriculum planning (McLachlan et al., 2006; McLachlan & Arrow, 2014). My research suggests teachers are eclectic in their beliefs and practices and only superficially subscribe to the sociocultural theorising that underpins Te Whāriki; cherry picking a few key concepts from Vygotsky’s (1978; 1987) theorising on early childhood curriculum.

Many teachers appear to struggle with understanding the relationship between a curriculum document, assessment and planning for children’s learning; not helped by lack of professional learning opportunities following the Budget cuts of 2008/2009. ERO reviews (2007; 2013) reveal teachers also struggle with assessment using Te Whāriki. Research by my late doctoral student, Rachel Lim showed the disconnection between the learning stories being prepared and the planning cycle (Anthony, McLachlan & Lim, 2015). I endorse ERO’s (2013) questioning of the longevity of a curriculum document. My personal view is Te Whāriki needs to be updated and to provide greater guidance in many areas: subject/domain areas of learning; bilingualism, biliteracy and multiliteracies; children with special needs; teaching second language, minority and priority learners; developmental progression and others. Given the sector will not be funded for 100% qualified teachers, it is also important to provide greater guidance for all staff on how to promote children’s learning and development and achieve learning outcomes. The Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) in Australia provides greater guidance on teaching and what learning will look like; consequently it is a much clearer curriculum statement.

Teachers also need further guidance on the range of simple assessment methods that can be used as part of assessment and planning, short, medium and long term across a child’s term of enrolment (Featherstone, 2011; McLachlan, Edwards, Margrain & McLean, 2013). I think many teachers currently confuse the artefact of the learning story as the assessment, rather than considering the range of methods that might be used to gather data needed for writing a learning story. Although Kei tua o te pae (Ministry of Education, 2009) gave teachers exemplars of what learning stories might look like, it doesn’t seem to have aided teachers’ understanding about the role of formative, summative and ipsative assessment in the early childhood setting. I await the Advisory Group’s findings on how the implementation of Te Whāriki can be strengthened with interest.

About the author

Claire McLachlan leads the Early Years Education programmes at Massey University, where she teaches a range of papers on research methods, language and literacy and young children’s thinking in the B.A, B.Ed, M.Ed and Ed.D programmes in the Institute of Education, as well as doing significant postgraduate supervision. Claire’s primary research interests are in early literacy, physical activity, early childhood curriculum, assessment and teachers’ beliefs about practice. Claire has five recent books on curriculum, literacy, and assessment and a forthcoming edited collection on literacy in the Springer Early Childhood Research Series. Claire’s current research focuses on physical activity and nutrition and involves a collaborative study with Jumping Beans and Best Start centres. In 2012 Claire was awarded a Massey University Research Award for distinction in educational research. She is married and has three children and six gorgeous grandchildren.

You can contact Claire on (09) 414 0800, Ext 43518 or c.j.mclachlan@massey.ac.nz.

Her address is: Massey University Institute of Education, Private Bag 102904, North Shore, 0745, Auckland.
References


As teachers, it is a fundamental expectation that we positively affect the learning of the children with whom we work. There is currently an increasing expectation from society that as teachers we are able to demonstrate how our teaching practice promotes children's learning outcomes. However, recent ERO national reports highlight the fact that many centres are not implementing Te Whāriki to its full intent nor practising in ways that are strongly aligned with their stated intentions for children’s learning. This article will examine this disconnect and propose some possible explanations for it as well as suggesting ideas to consider as we attempt to bridge the divide between what teachers do and what we want children to learn.

As a sector we are justifiably proud that Te Whāriki provides a curriculum that each centre is able to contextualise for its community. However, this strength is also the curriculum's biggest weakness (Nuttall, 2002; Dalli, 2011) because it runs the risk of being loosely and inaccurately interpreted and in some cases being used to justify poor practice (ERO, 2013a). It is certainly our experience as PLD facilitators that, all too often, teachers are not able to confidently articulate the learning outcomes that they prioritise nor the specific ways in which they support these.

The findings of the Education Review Office (ERO) report Priorities for children's learning in early childhood services (ERO, 2013b) appear to support our experience. The fact that only 17% of ECE services had teaching practices strongly aligned to their philosophy points to a lack of alignment between what teachers are doing and what they say they want for children’s learning. Joce Nuttall (2002) poses the question:

On what basis do [early childhood teachers] think, decide and act in the design and implementation of curriculum experiences? And what is the role of Te Whāriki in this process? (p. 92)

There are several possible explanations for why teacher's actions may not align well with the centre philosophy and/or Te Whāriki. They include the fact that teachers’ emphasis on the principles and strands rather than goals of the curriculum weaken the links to what these actually look like in terms of children’s learning (ERO, 2013a) and the uncertainty of the teachers’ role in a child-led curriculum (Hedges, 2015). Sometimes teachers are so concerned about being judged as being teacher-directed that they view their role as simply setting a learning environment and then being co-players with children. This runs the risk of the curriculum following the children’s interests to such an extent that teachers feel that they cannot introduce new content unless the child/ren have already expressed interest in it. This is not the intention of the curriculum nor the socio-cultural theory on which it is based.

Another explanation for why teaching and priorities for children’s learning may not be in alignment is that the centre philosophy may not be an accurate representation of the beliefs of the teachers in terms of what is most important for children to learn. Sometimes philosophy statements are not contributed to by the teaching team or written by management and may remain unchanged for long periods. Other times they are reviewed in a somewhat cursory manner without the time spent in professional discussion to reach shared understandings about priorities for children’s learning.

In order to teach in ways that will support the valued outcomes for children’s learning, teachers first need to be clear as to what they are trying to achieve and then deliberately and reflectively practice in ways that promote those outcomes. Epstein (2007) advocates for teachers making intentional decisions about their actions and implementing the best strategies in any given circumstance. This involves not only planning ahead to provide quality learning experiences but also responding spontaneously as teaching opportunities present themselves. Teachers need to act with purpose, with intention and with awareness.

The idea of intentional teaching is gaining popularity internationally and reflects the ideas expressed in the above paragraph. Although intentional teaching demands that teachers act with specific goals for children’s learning in mind, these goals are not necessarily set by the teacher (although they may be) and are balanced with the right
of the child to be an active participant in the teaching/learning partnership (Leggett & Ford, 2013). It may also be argued that it is important for teachers to make their learning intentions for children explicit so that they can be communicated to others and therefore their validity verified or challenged. This requires teachers to be knowledgeable, collaborative and reflective in their practice, working in partnership with whānau and colleagues to deepen and extend children’s learning.

Self-review and inquiry are two evaluative processes whereby teachers can check that their practice is working well to support children’s learning. Self-review is the examination of collective (team) teaching practice whereas inquiry is self-focused. Both self-review and inquiry require teachers to be reflective and to seek evidence on which to base their pedagogical decision-making. When these processes are carried out effectively, areas for improvement are identified and teachers are in the position to implement new and/or different strategies to better serve children’s learning.

In order to create a bridge between the learning outcomes teachers desire for children and their teaching practice consider implementing the following strategies:

- Ensure that the centre philosophy is a true reflection of the priority outcomes for children as seen by the teaching team and parents/whānau
- ‘Unpack’ the ideas in the philosophy to ensure that the understanding of what they look like in everyday practice is shared across the team.
- Use self-review as a tool to gauge how well aligned practice is with key ideas of the philosophy.
- Build a culture of reflection, inquiry and professional critique so that teachers support each other in practice in alignment with agreed priorities for children’s learning.
- Pause often to reflect on why you are about to do something, how it fits with priority outcomes and whether an alternative course of action would be better aligned.
- Articulate, and encourage others to articulate, the rationale behind your teaching decisions – everything from how the environment is set, who you support and who you allow to persist with difficulty, what learning stories you write and what information you share with others.

As teachers we have accepted the responsibility to affect children’s learning. Being increasingly intentional in our teaching will enable us to do this more and more effectively.

It is not about saying ‘I will intentionally teach children something’. It is about being intentional with what we provide throughout the day. –Connor (2010) p.3

Barbara and Bridgit are directors and professional learning facilitators at inspirED ECE with 15 years of combined experience in the field of ECE professional learning and over 40 years of combined experience in the ECE sector as registered teachers. inspirED ECE is the provider of teachers workshops for the ECC see http://www.ecc.org.nz/ and www.inspired-ece.co.nz for PLD opportunities that we currently have on offer that connect with this topic and others. We specialise in the areas of appraisal system design and skill development, mentor development, implementing Te Whāriki, teaching as inquiry, self review and meaningful evaluation. Do not hesitate to email us to discuss your centre’s professional learning needs. We are specifically focused on collaborating with you to provide customised, cost effective professional learning solutions.

References
ERO evaluated eight Pacific services with good leadership practices that offered an education curriculum in a Pacific language, were reviewed between March 2011 and March 2013, and given a three year return time.

The leaders of these services used their cultural models and asked themselves:

- What do we want to improve for the children in our service?
- What would be our top priority?
- Why do we need to make these improvements?
- How will we make them?
- What will this mean for the children, their parents and families, and the teachers?

These services had undergone varying levels of organisational change and leadership development. ERO’s review recommendations were the catalysts for these changes. The leaders knew they had to make improvements and took risks because their own comfort zones were being challenged. Their trajectory of improvement was due to establishing a shared philosophy and vision, clarifying accountabilities and responsibilities, and building the capability of leaders and teachers.

The following are examples of cultural models used by these services (ERO sought permission to include these).

**Falalalaga (Samoan)**

The art of mat weaving

We looked at other concepts and decided to use mat weaving – Falalalaga. It is like the way we raise our children, it is a continuous process, it never stops. The process of Falalalaga helps us to recognise the different developmental stages of our children. We use this process in planning programmes for our different age groups and in our self review.

**Fale Hanga (Tongan)**

Weavers House

As a Tongan, a fale Hanga is very important to us, it represents shelter, families, and community meetings. The idea came about because we have a fale in our yard here at the centre.

We created the fale in 3D so that we could actually touch it, display it, and move the posts around. We work on each post at a time. The model is something we can actually see and test.

It is also a good way for our parents to understand the concept of the Pou. If we were to actually build one, a real fale, they would have input towards the planning and building, what it would look like etc.

In the past, parents would come and listen to what we would have to say, we would hand out paper after paper but they couldn’t relate to what we were saying as they couldn’t see or touch, it’s not really there.

**Kopu Tangata (Cook Island)**

Our partnership with our whānau

The actual waka itself is all about our tamariki, all our children, they’re on the journey, so the waka is going through the journey. The sails of the waka, are the Kopu Tangata, which means our partnership with our whānau, our partnership with our whānau, is working with our tamariki to work together, that’s the whole whanauaugatanga.

Our four oars are like the four pou of ERO’s Ngā Pou Here. We have used Cook Island language to describe the meaning of the oars. We don’t have Fale in the Cook Islands. We are one with the land and the sea. That’s why we thought we’d use the waka as our metaphor.

We showed parents the waka. We told them how we wanted to give them something that related to their children here in the Puna, and we shared our story how we related to the sea and the land. We talked about the waka being an important symbol for us. The families agreed and thought it was a good idea as well.

This has been useful to use in the centre because you can see it with the children, because we’re taking them on a journey too.

It’s working for us. We use it in our planning and for self review too.

25 years ago...
- A lap top was the top of your lap!
- 20 Hours didn’t exist
- Qualified ECE teachers didn’t exist
- We had more males working in ECE than today!
- We got paid more on a per-child basis

What does success and best practice look like in 2016 and beyond?
- How have childcare centre designs changed and what will the future bring?
- Was it easier to run a successful childcare business (community-owned or privately-owned) then or now?
- Do children learn more today under our guidance, or are we beating them down with “PC-ness”?

These and many other topics will be covered for both centre owners and managers, committee members & teaching staff

Mark your diary now!
Registrations open in October!
Magic Kingdom experiments with digital learning and feedback

By Sarah Thornton

Magic Kingdom Childcare and Early Learning Centre is at the forefront of delivering innovative learning experiences for its children. Two technology-based initiatives have proved major success stories for the Auckland centre and have confirmed their belief in taking the lead with digital innovations in early childhood education.

Research over many years demonstrates that if children are to become lifelong learners, they must develop core skills and knowledge in the early years of schooling. Early reading and writing experiences should ensure children develop confidence and independence as readers, positive attitudes to reading, and view reading and writing as rewarding and enjoyable.

ECE owners and educators, Nikeeta Singh and her husband Dr Darius Singh, understand the significance of providing diverse opportunities for pre-schoolers and see digital platforms (applied appropriately and responsibly) as a vital part of the learning mix. Nikeeta is a fully registered teacher with more than 13 years’ experience in early childhood education, with a focus on school readiness, and the Director of the Chrysalis Group (which Magic Kingdom belongs to). Darius is a former university professor and an Executive Member of the Early Childhood Council.

Together, the Singh’s invented, trademarked and patented a unique online tool called ‘Learning Roots and Shoots™’, which won the inaugural 2013 Early Childhood Council/Telecom Innovation Award. It has since been described by The Education Review Office as “a useful and innovative framework for documenting children’s learning, interests, next steps and life contexts, which includes child and parent voice.”

Online tool ‘Learning Roots and Shoots™’ enables caregivers to:

- Track their children’s learning and development at a glance.
- Log in to view their child’s entire portfolio and learning outcomes, displayed as chronological and colour coded learning shoots growing on their child’s learning tree.
- View teachers observations and learning stories with a handy ‘quick click’ search tool.
- Go beyond fundamental learning stories to identify curriculum specific learning skills (i.e. learning roots).
- Thread all of these skills and interests together throughout the child’s time at the centre so that for the first time, linking emerging developments can be easily organised, visualised and comprehended.

In late 2014, the Singh’s embraced another innovation by agreeing to trial digital literacy app Bud-e at their Magic Kingdom Early Learning Centre in Blockhouse Bay, Auckland. They felt that the app aligned with their core mission of delivering literacy and quality in an innovative way, and decided to ‘road test’ over a six month period.

The Bud-e trial created the following learning outcomes:

- Accelerated reading and comprehension.
- Many of the children have developed really well with their high frequency words.
- The prompt questions in the app create open-ended discussions.
- A few of the children have actually started to write because they used the app.
- One child is learning to write phonics of words that aren’t even included in the app because it has helped with the development of her phonics knowledge.
- Children are enthusiastic and proud of the work they are doing.
- Children really like sharing their work and how well they are doing with the app, for example, if they are focusing on writing they will come and say, “look, I’ve written this word”.
- Teaches children to read and write, and engages the different senses, which is the best way for children to learn.

The Bud-e trial at Magic Kingdom was deemed a success and will now be rolled out across all their ECE’s centres, including their state of the art childcare facility Chrysalis, which opened in February 2015. Chrysalis was a Finalist for Excellence in Innovation in the 2014 Westpac Business Awards (West Auckland) and has been nominated for three more categories this year. The Bud-e app is supported by printed books from author and literacy specialist, Jill Eggleton.

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Apart from retirement, the reasons most owners decide to sell their businesses are desires to travel, spend more time with family and friends, spend less time in business, and release capital for other ventures. Change is always an attractive proposition, and in the current market now is a great time to consider making the change and exiting.

For many business owners, retirement plans mean selling their businesses and living off the sale proceeds. However, this leaves business owners dependent on the funds they receive from just one asset. A downturn in business performance, changes in the economy, or a shift in government policies can strain the prospects of a comfortable retirement.

In New Zealand, some 62% of current business owners are over the age of 50, while 46% plan to retire within the next 5 years, according to recent ANZ surveys. If all of these baby boomer business owners decide to sell at a similar time, they may find they have inadvertently driven down the value of their businesses.

It would be nice to think that business owners started the planning and sale process years before they hoped to sell, though this is unfortunately not always the case. When it comes time to selling your business, the first and foremost step should be planning. Giving consideration to the most appropriate method of sale is a good idea at the outset:

1. Staged Sale: Staged selling refers to selling part of your business now and subsequent part[s] later, while getting paid in instalments for each part sold. Typically this is done by selling shares, but it can be by asset sale if the business assets are capable of being sold in parts.
2. Vendor Finance Sale: This often involves selling all of your business now and getting paid in instalments over time or a full price later. A vendor may want to retain a certain level of control over the process. This can be done by either selling the business assets or shares.
3. Outright Sale: An outright sale is appropriate when an owner wants a complete exit and decides to sell the entire business as a going concern, including tangible and intangible assets, plus stock. Despite increasing demand for staged sales, outright sales are still the preferred option for childcare business owners who want a complete exit from their childcare centres, to be paid a full settlement figure, and to retain no control or responsibility. On the surface, these are some of the simplest forms of divestment and involve the following steps:
   a. The first step towards making your retirement dreams a reality is to contact an experienced childcare business broker for a no obligation initial consultation. Naturally, this will be treated with complete confidentiality.
   b. Your broker will provide you with a “market appraisal” including details of the sale process.
   c. Next, your broker will consult with you as to how the business will be marketed. In many cases, buyers are found from the broker’s own database of qualified buyers waiting for childcare businesses. Throughout the selling process, your broker controls the information potential buyers are given – commercially sensitive information is withheld until a written offer has been presented to the owners.
   d. Business brokers prepare a sale and purchase agreement detailing the purchasers offer and any conditions that are to be fulfilled prior to the deal becoming unconditional.
   e. Finally, once an offer is signed by both parties, due diligence begins. Under the due diligence process, purchasers have a specified period of time to verify the information supplied to them. Throughout the process, experienced professional brokers liaise with all parties concerned including accountants and lawyers to ensure the conditions of the agreement are satisfied and the sale of your business becomes unconditional.

Childcare centres are highly desirable and sought after in the current market place. Prospective buyers wait a long time for a good childcare business to come on market. There is a good chance that a buyer is already waiting to take over possession of your business.

Strategically exiting a business.....

By Pra Jain

Pra Jain of Link is a specialist childcare business broker with decades of business selling experience.

To find out more, contact Pra today:
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Innovation in ECE – How to REALLY stand out

By Phil Sales

SEPTEMBER 2015

Early childhood educators are a savvy lot. There isn’t much that the more experienced ones haven’t seen before. Add to this, best practice, professional development, regular self-audits and visits from ERO and you might think that there is little room for further improvement. So, if we are all at the top of our game, how do we continue to innovate and make sure that we stand out from the rest?

If change is continuous then it might be argued that there is always room for improvement. Moreover, innovation implies novelty which, in turn, implies a continuous push to find things that don’t already exist. Ironically, once an innovation is in place then it quickly loses its novelty and becomes mainstream and business-as-usual.

So, what can we do in this constant push for new innovation to replace old stuff? How can we make innovation (and innovative thinking) a corner-stone in our early childhood centre philosophy?

I am going to suggest that we can do this through a three-part process that involves acceptance, generation and implementation. Individually, each of these steps can be quite useful but their real power lies in using them collectively to bring an innovative idea through to reality.

The first thing is to accept innovative practice as an important part of your day-to-day activity. Make a point of regularly talking about innovation in your early childhood centre, discussing what it might look like, seeing what others are doing and encouraging colleagues to come up with novel ideas and suggestions.

One useful technique for finding innovative ideas is SCAMPER.

SCAMPER is a very simple, yet powerful, way to see things in a different light. Each letter stands for a different prompt that you can apply to an existing situation.

- **Substitute** – Can you swap materials or resources for something else?
- **Combine** – Can you combine services or resources in different ways?
- **Adapt** – Can you take other ideas and apply them to your early childhood centre?
- **Modify / distort** – Can you warp or exaggerate something to create a new opportunity?
- **Put to another use** – Can you re-purpose, recycle, up-cycle or even deliver services to new markets?
- **Eliminate** – Can you find things that aren’t necessary and remove them?
- **Reverse / Rearrange** – Can you swap things around or do things differently?

At first glance, this might look rather daunting, but by taking time to reflect on each of the seven components you may find that some really interesting opportunities open up.

For instance, can your centre be used after-hours for meetings, presentations or additional services? Can you offer public service talks at these times by health professionals, service providers and other people? Can you charge for the room, sell refreshments or raffle products donated by the provider at each event?

Is your centre near a church or reception venue? What is the opportunity for offering a babysitting / child entertainment service for local weddings, based at your centre?

Ultimately, your SCAMPERing will be shaped by what you want to achieve. Do you need to fundraise, build relationships with new
families, become a community hub or promote your centre’s unique selling point? SCAMPER within the context of your number 1 priority and see what develops!

For some centres, however, the problem isn’t coming up with new ideas. Instead, the real problem is finding a way to make them work. Implementation can be a major stumbling block but there are ways to work around things that look impossible.

As business-author and public speaker Ed Muzio explains in A Practical Approach to Innovation, innovation is a balancing act between ideas and reality. Too much reality, too soon, may stifle ideas while giving ideas too much free reign may be a costly mistake.

Muzio talks about a three-part process used by Walt Disney to bring innovative ideas through to a successful conclusion. Each part of the process equates with one of three roles: Dreamer, Realist and Critic.

The Dreamer sets the agenda by thinking about possibilities. This is an expansive role which involves wishing and visioning. In the Disney example, the primary Dreamer was none other than Walt Disney, himself, and his purpose was to place the challenge in front of others.

The role of the Realist is to put the dream into reality. This is a job for a ‘nuts and bolts’ person with a good grasp of practicalities and planning. The Realist comes up with the ‘best draft plan’ to bring the vision into reality.

The Critic then critiques the Realist’s plans. The Critic is interested in things that will lead to the plan failing. The Critic looks for weaknesses, risks, problems and other issues that might hamper the proposal’s success.

This may sound like an essentially negative role but there is a neat trick involved here. Instead of sending the plan back to the Dreamer, the Critic goes back to the Realist. Success depends on both Critic and Realist working together to achieve the Dreamer’s vision so the focus is on ‘what will work?’ The Realist and Critic keep iterating back-and-forth until they have a workable solution that achieves the Dreamer’s vision.

In the Disney context, it is easy to see how various production problems (such as realistic human animation and new camera apparatus) were passed from Dreamer to Realist to Critic until a workable and innovative solution was found.

The Disney analogy is not a simple ‘fortuitous accident’ when we come to applying this model to the early childhood environment. Disney’s place at the forefront of children’s entertainment was due to many of the factors that he pioneered through his visionary technique. For the early childhood sector, the question should be ‘can we achieve similar levels of engagement through our own use of innovate practice?’

If we really want to stand out then we need to think about why it is that we exist in the first place. No, this isn’t an existentialist question but rather one about our purpose as a service provider.

Your centre probably already has at least one point-of-difference that helps your customers to understand you better. This might be a philosophical approach, a specialisation or a unique understanding. Alternatively, it might be location, facilities or opening hours. Either way, you are probably delivering a special service that your customers value because of what it means to them.

These points-of-difference are good places to start looking for innovation opportunities. Develop your understanding of what your customer wants by observing, listening and asking questions. Remember that this isn’t about fitting the customer into what you are already offering. It is about thinking how you can develop a service that solves their problems.

By shifting your perspective you can re-frame issues to produce different results. For instance, there may be parents in your area who would pay for an after-school service where their children can get some hot food and a quiet place to do their homework. If we are talking about the same families that have [or have had] children at your early childhood centre then you have a ‘captive’ audience who already know and love your product!

Innovation isn’t just about doing new things. Novelty for novelty’s sake is just pointless. But innovation that addresses real needs by providing valuable solutions is something that will really make your early childhood centre stand out!

### About the author

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

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MEET the new ECC President

How long have you been working in the early childhood sector and why ECE?

My foray into ECE began as I was halfway through my seventh form year at school and I was accepted into an ECE teacher’s certificate programme. Growing up the eldest of six children, I’d always taken on a lot of responsibility for my siblings and my favourite game as a child was to play schools. I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but it wasn’t until I was nearly through school that I became aware early childhood teaching was an option. I feel a much greater affinity for younger children so this resonated with me immediately. I’ve now been involved in the ECE sector for 23 years in both private and community based services and it still feels as though I’m only getting started. Over this time I’ve upgraded to a Diploma of Teaching at Auckland College of Education and completed a Graduate Diploma in Educational Management (ECE). I currently serve on the advisory committee for ECE teacher education programmes at Auckland University and work at Kids Kampus in Mt Eden, Auckland.

What do you love most about working in ECE?

I love that our work makes a real difference in the lives of children and families. For both, an early childhood centre offers so much opportunity; the chance for a child to be nurtured and receive a positive experience at the start of their learning journey, and for a parent the chance to access support and understanding in raising their family. As early childhood teachers we are at the forefront of supporting families every day to do the best job they can.

What do you see as your role as the ECC President?

As President my primary role is to provide Governance with the National Executive for the ECC. As such, goals are identified and set in our strategic plan, and its part of my role to ensure those goals remain appropriate and focused on the needs of our members. It’s also about being able to think strategically and find workable solutions to the issues that we face in our sector. My background in operating ECE centres is essential in understanding these challenges and when contributing to policy or the development of new resources for our members.

What is the biggest challenge facing ECE today?

The issue that remains a huge concern for us is the uncertainty of our funding revenue and the systematic way this has been undermined by the Government in successive budgets. Many of our members are operating under increased strain as the fiscal pressures these funding cuts have caused continue to bite. The situation is exacerbated by the stalling of work carried out by the ECE Funding Advisory Group who is advising the Ministry on construction of a new ECE funding model. There is little indication of when this work is to resume or that an end to funding cuts is in sight.

As the ECC President what would you like to accomplish?

I would like to look at ways that we can ensure the ECC remains relevant for our members and the leading body in supporting centre owners and managers. We’re seeing a shift over time of more centres coming under the ownership of fewer operators and this can have an impact on our ability to advocate persuasively when it matters. The ECC has a long-standing history of providing leadership across the ECE sector from our Annual Conference and professional development programme, to our publications. The challenge for us is to continue to innovate in a way that retains the core purpose of our organisation and delivers the resources needed to achieve a world-class ECE sector. Just as our members are delivering early childhood education for 21st century learners and a future we can only imagine, we must also consider how the ECC can retain its place as the go-to member body now and into that same future.

What do you see as the ECC’s main role for members?

The ECE sector has undergone significant change in the time that I have been involved with it, and I think that this is only going to continue. As a member of the ECC I was always so grateful that for any impending change, be it regulatory or something more obscure, I could always count on the information arriving in my inbox with the pertinent details illustrated for my consideration. I see this disseminating of information for our members as a major function of the ECC. We take away some of the burden for members having to find this out for themselves and provide tangible solutions that our members can use and tailor for their own settings.

We also provide a voice for our members in the public arena with a significant focus on influencing the ECE Policy in which our members operate. With a sector as diverse as early childhood, we need a united voice to represent the views of ECE services and the realities of our daily work both in the public eye and at a National level. The ECC is acutely aware of this so gleaning feedback from our members through regular contact and surveys, remains a critical part of our role in order to do this successfully.

What makes a great leader?

Taking on a leadership role can be one of the most rewarding things an individual can do. The ability to influence the direction of your centre, to deliver great customer service and high quality ECE for children is truly
aspirational, yet it remains a real challenge for many of us. My own path has been full of lessons to learn along the way and it continues to be something I reflect on in my practice. I think a great leader understands the true value of the people they work with and that they are essential to achieving the organisation’s vision. Great leaders not only inspire people to do this but help their people to reach their own full potential in the process.

Part of this is knowing as the leader that it’s not your job to have all the answers but rather to steer the organisation into finding the answers together that everyone can buy into and implement. I recently came across a quote from Peter Drucker that I think sums this up: “only three things happen naturally in organisations: friction, confusion and underperformance. Everything else requires leadership.”

**WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF LEADERSHIP ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED/READ?**

Years ago a lecturer gave my class a piece of advice that I have used frequently as a teacher and a leader. She told us when confronted with a problem, to buy yourself time. In practice this means to respond as best you can in the moment, buying yourself just enough time to investigate and follow up once armed with more information and a resolution. What I have found is that people want to feel they’ve been listened to and that an authentic attempt to remedy their concerns has been undertaken.

More recently at some professional development I attended, the facilitator expanded on the importance of this idea and discussed the concept of perceived indifference. This is the reason that 68% of customers chose to stop doing business with you. They perceive that you are indifferent to them, that their patronage is not valued. Being in the business of service delivery it’s vitally important that all members of the team are encouraged to take every opportunity to personalise the experience of their customer and install a connection with your organisation.

**AFTER A BUSY DAY/WEEK HOW DO YOU UNWIND?**

I’m a bit of gym addict and this is my essential strategy in managing a better work-life balance. It’s not only a great way to promote overall health but I find this is where I can completely switch off from my work for a short time. I also love to spend time at home with my husband and our two Dobermans, Aston and Coco. We live on a lifestyle block and we can usually be found enjoying coffee on the deck with the dogs. My favourite weekends are those where I can live in my gumboots and work in the garden.

**ANY SURPRISING INTEREST OR TALENT YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE WITH US?**

I have an unhealthy obsession with Aston Martin cars and I enjoy any opportunity to travel and explore the world. Growing up with parents involved in motor sports and working in travel and tourism, I think sparked some of these interests.
MEET THE ECC’S

**Tim Lainson**  
Secretary

Tim has been on the ECC Executive for the past five years and is the current secretary, a position he has held for the past 4 years. He also serves on the Policy Sub-Committee.

Originally from the UK, Tim has been living and working in New Zealand for the past eleven years. Tim’s dual role for both the Living & Learning Foundation and for Kindercare Learning Centres gives him a broad perspective on current issues in the early childhood sector. His role in the development of the Living & Learning Foundation ensures that Tim has an in-depth understanding of the not-for-profit sector, where he is able to use his pro-active and creative problem solving skills effectively. Tim's commercial background of over 25 years' experience means he is fully conversant with the needs of service providers and the pressures they face.

**Lonnie Parker**  
Treasurer

Lonnie has been on the ECC Executive since 2007, served in the dual role of Vice-President and Treasurer in 2008 and solely as Treasurer from 2009 onwards.

Lonnie became involved in the childcare sector when she and her husband Ashton purchased a centre in November 2005. Two years later, they extended that centre and built a new one. Both centres are now inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to Early Childhood Education.

Lonnie has worked for a variety of corporates - airline, meat processing and newspapers, in accounting, IT and senior management roles. She is a qualified accountant and has a Masters in Business Administration degree. Her qualifications and experience mean she can bring strategic thinking and good governance disciplines to the Executive Committee.

In addition to the childcare centres, Lonnie and Ashton are involved in other sectors, including residential private hospital care of the elderly. They have two young sons – Jackson and Henry and six grandchildren.

**Lyn Eder**  
Executive Member

Lyn is a registered nurse, qualified midwife, and mum. She was a Plunket Nurse in Christchurch for many years, whilst also teaching at Rangi Ruru Early Childhood College.

Lyn and her partner own Portobelo Preschools and Nurseries, in Christchurch West, and Kaiapoi. Their first preschool was demolished after the 2011 earthquake, but they hope to have a presence back in the central city one day.

Lyn’s passion for babies and children has extended to include quality education and care, and the ‘big picture’ behind these outcomes.

Lyn spent a year on the ECC Executive in 2012, participating on the Policy Sub-Committee. She is looking forward to being part of the ECC in 2015/16, helping to represent South Island centres. Lyn organises and attends the ECC network meetings in Canterbury, which are viewed as a valuable support and information network for preschool owners and managers.

**Maree Moselen**  
Vice-President

Maree is licence of three centres on the North Shore of Auckland. Her story and background is similar to many in the field: a licensee and teacher passionate about children’s care and education.

Maree is supported in the business by her husband and their two adult daughters.

ICT is one of Maree’s interests in education; this interest has seen her present at conferences nationally and internationally.

Maree is an advocate of professional learning and supporting qualified teachers in her centres. Being involved with the ECC executive provides opportunities to be involved in another aspect of education.
Kia Ora Koutou.
I am the Operations Manager of Toddlers Turf Childcare Centre Incorporated in Manukau City. Being part of the Early Childhood Council since 2008 has been a marvellous educational and personally satisfying experience. I have been able to represent the community owned not-for-profit voice of early childhood education, participating in both the policy and conference sub-committees. I have been a teacher in New Zealand, South Africa and England and my teaching qualifications are Montessori Diploma of Teaching and a Diploma of Teaching ECE. However, it is experience which I place most value on. Experience within the early childhood profession makes me an effective leader and experience within the Early Childhood Council makes the Council an effective representative body.
Nga Mihi

Mia Mauthner
Executive Member

I live in Auckland on the North Shore. My husband and I have two preschools - Pukeko Preschool Mangere East and Pakuranga Heights. And I love working with the families and children in my neighbourhoods.

When my children were younger I did a lot of work for kindergartens, play centres and playgroup committees as well as a community arts centre. On the strength of this work I won a community scholarship which allowed me to get my degree in Information Technology. However I found a much happier life studying and working in ECE. My three children are all grown up now so I am ready to give back to the community.

Having been part of a number of different services as a parent and teacher I really value the importance of the choices we have to best meet the needs of each child. I thinks that the ECC does a fantastic job serving the wide variety of awesome ECE services in Aotearoa.

Claudia Forts-Fortaleza
Executive Member

Kia Ora. Originally from the Philippines, I am a devoted mother of two kind and loyal teenagers and live in Nelson with our fun loving kittens.

I am blessed to own and manage a private, rural preschool in Wakefield, Nelson. In my role I have the opportunity to empower a dedicated team of adults who educate our Tamariki and support Parents, Whānau & Caregivers at Wakefield Preschool.

I strongly believe it is important to have someone on the ECC Executive who can speak for rural centres, so they have the same opportunity to be heard. We exist and I represent our rural isolated families and children who have right to quality education.

I am passionate about people [children and adults]. It is important to have balance of business, education and moral support. Let’s not forget we are also human. As challenging it is to go through life and manage to overcome difficulties, we need to be in touch with people who genuinely care and give time to provide moral and other support to our members.

Jill Oliver
Executive Member

Kia Ora Koutou. I am the Operations Manager of Toddlers Turf Childcare Centre Incorporated in Manukau City. Being part of the Early Childhood Council since 2008 has been a marvellous educational and personally satisfying experience. I have been able to represent the community owned not-for-profit voice of early childhood education, participating in both the policy and conference sub-committees. I have been a teacher in New Zealand, South Africa and England and my teaching qualifications are Montessori Diploma of Teaching and a Diploma of Teaching ECE. However, it is experience which I place most value on. Experience within the early childhood profession makes me an effective leader and experience within the Early Childhood Council makes the Council an effective representative body.

Nga Mihi

Dr Darius Singh
Executive Member

Darius has over a decade of experience in executive management and five years’ experience in dealing with TEC (Tertiary Education Commission) and MOE (Ministry of Education) on various issues via his previous position as Professor of Technology Management and HOD Mechanical Engineering. He is a member of the NZ Institute of Directors, is a Fellow of the NZ Institute of Management and has previously served on a number of private and public Boards.

Darius and his wife, Nikeeta, jointly own and operate Chrysalis Group, which among other services such as business, management and governance mentoring, comprises four childcare centres: Fern Garden Preschool in Tauranga, Magic Kingdom Childcare in Auckland Central, Milky Way Early Learning Centre in Auckland CBD, and Chrysalis Early Learning Centre in West Auckland.

Darius is passionate about effective and best practices in governance, education management, teaching and learning, and in particular - research on innovative techniques in these areas (as he has published in academic forums and created patents and trademarks in his career to date).
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Work Health and Safety Laws

We have laws that aim to prevent workplace death, injury and illness, primarily the Health and Safety in Employment Act. However the workplace health and safety law is in the process of being changed.

The main objective of the new Health and Safety Reform Bill is to provide a balanced and consistent framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces. Some of the ways the law does this is by:

- protecting workers, volunteers, children, parents, contractors and others from harm by requiring duty holders to eliminate or minimise risks associated with work, whether that work is paid or unpaid
- providing for fair and effective representation, consultation, cooperation and issue resolution in relation to work health and safety at work
- promoting the provision of advice and education about work health and safety, and providing a framework for continuous improvement and progressively higher standards of work health and safety.

The main responsibility for ensuring health and safety at work is placed on persons conducting businesses or undertakings, or the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU). A PCBU is the organisation – that is, the centre or group (if a corporate where more than one centre is in common ownership).

Workplace health and safety laws require centres to think about and implement ways to make sure its workers are provided the highest level of protection against harm to their health, welfare and safety at work, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Health and Safety Reform Bill means that centres must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their staff and others. This duty on a centre is not entirely new. Workplace health and safety has previously been covered by the Health and Safety in Employment Act. There have been some problems associated with the current Act, such as some centres do not know when, or indeed if they should, report an incident to WorkSafe New Zealand.

The range of compliance tools and guidelines to support good quality implementation is not great. Under the proposed Bill that area will be strengthened. The penalties currently available under the Act are not thought to be sufficiently high enough to act as a real incentive to change practice to a more safety-conscious workplace.

What does this mean for Early Childhood Centres?

One of the most confusing aspects of the model is the use of the term “Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking” (PCBU). In fact, this will usually be a business entity (eg the company that owns the centre). It is possible for an individual person to be a PCBU (for example if they are a sole trader or self-employed). In a centre, this means the PCBU can be:

- the centre as an entity
- the centre owner as an individual
- the centre manager as an individual.

Note that the centre manager could also be an “officer” rather than the PCBU, depending upon the circumstances of a particular incident or event.

An important part of this definition is the use of the phrase “so far as is reasonably practicable”. It is too early to know what this may mean, but it is likely to imply that there is less sole responsibility and more emphasis on shared responsibility of health and safety practices in the workplace. That means ECE centre staff are regarded as a team.

This means committees talk amongst themselves; and consult with their centre manager; who consults with staff and parents.

Caution, if one of your staff raises a workplace health and safety issue with you, you do nothing and the worker subsequently refuses to undertake a task they truly believe to be unsafe for them or for children, you:

- Cannot take disciplinary action against the staff member; and
- You may be held accountable and at risk of fine or prosecution or both

Take your health and safety responsibilities seriously!

Penalties

There are a range of enforcement tools available to WorkSafe New Zealand, including enforceable undertakings. There are a wider range of options available to the Court when sentencing (including adverse publicity orders, training orders, project orders etc).

Overall, there is a tiered offence regime with graduated penalties so that the scale of the penalty is in-keeping with the scale of the offence.

Who is covered?

PCBUs (or centres) that employ paid workers are covered by workplace health and safety laws. They have the primary duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of its workers, including volunteers. This means that a person who carries out work in any capacity for a centre is covered by the Bill. Workers have a duty to take reasonable care.

Centres also have a duty to ensure that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the business or undertaking. “Other persons” includes children, parents, contractors and other persons visiting your centre.

What you need to know

Your centre has the primary duty under Health and Safety Reform Bill to protect the health and safety of people who are at the workplace or who may be affected by the work that is being done, so far as is reasonably practicable.

This means that the centre must do what is, or what was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done to ensure your health and safety. To do this you need to consider a number of factors including:

- what could happen to you at the workplace,
- how likely it is to happen,
- how bad might it be if it does happen,
- what can be done to minimise or eliminate the risk, and
- the cost of eliminating or minimising the risk.

The centre does not need to guarantee the safety of staff and others, but they need to do all that is reasonably practicable. Sometimes this might mean that the centre simply provides information and instructions on what the health and safety practices and rules are for that centre. At other times this...
might mean that the centre does a lot more, such as providing work specific training and protective equipment.

Under the Bill ‘health’ means physical and mental health. The centre has to ensure that those working for them are safe from psychological injury, including matters like bullying, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The centre must also manage risks by eliminating risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risks, they must minimise those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

The centre may help to ensure the safety of staff and others by doing a wide variety of things. This may include:

- Providing you with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, where required
- Giving you instructions or training on how to do your work safely (e.g. safe child lifting practices; safe nappy changing procedures, etc)
- Ensuring that the machinery or plant that you use meets safety standards or requirements (for example, using the shower to clean a child), or
- Confirming that you have the relevant qualifications to carry out the work they give you. For example, first aid certificates or a current and valid driver’s license.

The role of the Centre owner/manager

The duty of a Centre owner or manager means you must:

- Take reasonable care to ensure you don’t affect the health and safety of others, for example other staff, children, parents, contractors or other visitors, members of the public, etc.
- Have clear health and safety policies in place, available for inspection by staff, parents and Ministry/ERO officials on request
- Have an investigation process in place for use when required
- Ensure appropriate health and safety information is made available to all staff, contractors, parents and other visitors to your centre (most centres have this information available at their reception counter; some require visitors to sign to acknowledge they have read the information)
- Identify and monitor health and safety hazards; record these in a register; and how they are to be removed or minimised.
- Report all significant health and safety incidents to WorkSafe New Zealand.

Taking reasonable care means doing what a reasonable person would do in the circumstances having regards to things like:

- Your knowledge
- Your role
- Yours skills and the resources available to you
- Your qualifications
- The information that you have, and
- The consequences to health and safety of a failure to act in the circumstances.

There are two areas for a centre to cover in its health and safety system:

1. What to do to prevent a health and safety issue; and
2. What to do when you have a health and safety issue (response).

Prevention

This consists of hazard and risk management practices, health and safety policies and the training and information provided to your staff, parents, visitors, etc.

Ensuring Health and Safety at your Centre

Taking reasonable care is simple. Just:

- Ensure staff follow all reasonable instructions given as far as they are able to,
- Ensure staff, parents and other visitors co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure that the centre has, and
- Talk to your staff if they have any concerns about their health and safety or the health and safety of others in relation to their work.

Other ways of making sure you take reasonable care are:

- Ensuring staff carry out tasks within the role they have at your centre
- Not requiring staff to do tasks that they do not have the skills to undertake, and
- Not requiring staff to do anything that would be obviously unsafe.

Some examples of the things staff can do to make sure what they do is safe include:

- Reading, understanding and cooperating with the policies and procedures provided to them by the centre.
- If they are tired and their role involves driving, let their manager know they may not be fit to drive.

Centres must also consult with all their workers about work health and safety matters. Consultation must include giving staff the opportunity to provide ideas about how to make everyone as safe as possible at your centre.

This can be done in various ways. For example, a centre may have a large number of full and part-time workers where structured arrangements involving health and safety committees may be suitable. On occasions the centre may also engage contractors or volunteers to carry out specific tasks, where arrangements such as ‘toolbox talks’ (short discussions on specific health and safety topics relevant to the task) may be the most practical way to consult them.

Other ways to consult include:

- Including health and safety issues and/or updates in your centre’s newsletters
- Providing regular health and safety updates on the notice board or website with information, including its latest safe work policies and procedures
- Having a suggestion (e-mail) box for staff and/or parents to send suggestions to about ways to improve health and safety practices and other matters
- Including health and safety as a regular topic for staff meetings
- Holding toolbox talks where specific health and safety topics relevant to the task at hand are discussed.

Some centres may need a mix of consultation mechanisms to suit different types of workers and working arrangements.

Centres do not need to establish new consultation arrangements if there are already regular and effective discussions between management and workers, for example weekly team meetings or regular updates provided on a website or via a newsletter.

Working together is the best way to protect everyone’s health and safety.

Hazard and Risk Management

Both best health and safety practice and the requirement of the Ministry (under licensing criteria HS12) is for centres to have and maintain a hazard and risk register. Hazards are generally likely to be internal factors within the centre’s operating environment.
Training
Determining staff training needs must take into account your health and safety structure. For example, if you have a designated health and safety officer, the need for that person to participate in an external health and safety training event becomes more critical. You can consider providing an in-house training event for your whole staff – the Early Childhood Council (amongst others) offers this. Or you can run your own in-house event to either help develop your health and safety system and/or ensure staff are aware of the system and their obligations within it.

Information for Staff
Staff should be aware of all health and safety policies. Some centres require staff to “sign off” that they have read and understood their responsibilities under certain policies; others take a more relaxed approach. At the end of the day, particularly under the health and safety legislation, ignorance is not a defence.

Information for Parents and Visitors
The Ministry requires centres to make some information available to parents, such as fee schedules and health and safety policies, hazard registers, etc. They also recommend that you seek parent input into the development of some of these. Ensuring you have complete risk and hazard registers can be achieved by giving parents the opportunity to be involved, to offer suggested hazards and risks and to offer suggested mitigation strategies for some of these, e.g.: car park safety.

Response
This consists of your incident/event investigation process, the documentation you complete and keep, how/when you let who know, how you feed your learnings about the incident/event back into your prevention cycle and learn from it.

What if something happens - Incident Notification
While it is unlikely, if anything does happen you need to act quickly.

The Bill requires the centre to let WorkSafe New Zealand know of any significant incident as soon as possible. You also have a duty to keep records of notifiable events and the duty to preserve an accident site.

The ECC advises centres to also alert the Ministry of Education. While there is no requirement for this, it is better they hear about incidents from you than from the newspaper!

A ‘notifiable incident’ is a serious incident relating to the carrying out of work of the centre and involves:

- The death of a person (child, staff, contractor, parent, or other visitor)
- The serious injury or illness of a person – this will usually require immediate medical treatment, or
- A dangerous incident that exposes people to serious risk, for example the collapse of a structure or the accidental release or spill of a dangerous chemical.

To assist in determining what type of incident must be notified, ‘serious injury or illness’ and ‘dangerous incident’ are defined in the Act.

If something happens that is not as serious as a notifiable incident, the centre’s policies still govern the response. You should also consider:

- The need to let parents know about something affecting their child
- The need to investigate any incident and record the details and findings.

Issue resolution
There are also duties for centres to develop procedures for resolving health and safety issues that might arise, for example when there is disagreement about how best to deal with an identified hazard or risk. In these situations, all involved parties must communicate or meet with each other to attempt to resolve the issue.

If a work health and safety matter is still not resolved after following the procedure, you can contact WorkSafe New Zealand for further advice or assistance.

Response – Investigations
It is critical that centres initiate and conduct an investigation into every incident and near-miss at their centre. You may want to publish your investigation process as part of your policy. This gives confidence to parents and to the Ministry/ERO that you have things under control in the event of an incident.

Web links
For more information about Health and Safety visit these links:
Playground surfacing is a big capital item, and the process of choosing what is best for your centre can be daunting. If you are wanting to move away from loose fill material and buy a continuous (unitary) type of surfacing, you probably have some features that you’re looking for: drains water quickly, looks attractive, is easy to clean, will last, etc. But there are some important and less obvious matters that should come into the decision-making process. Here are some questions you can ask surfacing providers that will help you make the best possible decision. A reputable supplier will welcome the chance to answer questions and showcase their product. If they won’t or can’t give you satisfactory answers, then take your business elsewhere.

About the Product
1. Can you direct us to a playground in my area that I can visit? Walking on and seeing children playing on the surfacing is the best way to visualise it at your centre.
2. Are we able to talk to the playground owner? You will quickly find out the negative and positive features of the product.
3. What is the oldest installation we can visit?
4. Where is your product manufactured and how long has it been on the market?
5. What is the price of your product and does that include freight?
6. We assume your product complies with the New Zealand Playground Safety Standards. What evidence do you have to support this? The supplier should be able to give you test certificates that show compliance with the parts of NZS5828:2004 relating to:
   - Critical fall height (CFH) This indicates the surface’s ability to absorb impact and protect children from serious head injury. It is expressed in metres and you will be looking for a CFH that is at least equal to the highest piece of play equipment at your centre.
   - Resistance to abrasive wear This is important because it indicates whether the surfacing is likely to provide value for money over time. During testing the surfacing is subjected to an accelerated aging process and a wear index and wear ratio is ascertained for the product. The wear index must be less than 1.0 and the wear ratio between 1.0 and 3.0.
   - Slip resistance The Standard requires a slip resistance of not less than 40 in wet and dry conditions.
   - Resistance to indentation The surfacing should be able to be deformed under a test load and return to its original shape without cracking and splitting. The Standard requires that the residual indentation after 24 hours be not more than 5mm.
   - Ease of ignition The test method involves dropping a super-heated metal nut onto the surface and measuring the distance scorching travels – this must be no more than 35mm.

Product Warranty
1. What is the warranty period on your product?
2. What does the warranty cover and are there any exclusions?
3. Is the value of the warranty the same on the last day of the warranty period as on the first day? Or does it reduce in value over time?
4. Does it cover compliance with the New Zealand Playground Safety Standards for the full period of the warranty?
5. Have you ever had to replace your product within the warranty period? Why was that?
6. Who can we call to confirm that you support your product warranty?

Installation
1. What will the installation cost?
2. Does your price include everything – the product itself, excavation, dealing with tree roots and rocks, drainage, preparing the base, the borders, getting rid of rubbish, cleaning and reinstating the site?
3. Will you supply a detailed and transparent breakdown of all your costs?
4. Can you guarantee there will be no extra costs?
5. Who will install the product for us? The supplier should be able to arrange an installer who is fully trained in dealing with this product.
6. Can we visit 2 or 3 playgrounds that this person has installed?
Playground Mirrors  2 for $190

such great fun ... lots of different perspectives, watch yourself change shape as you move back & forth! bendy, concave or plain mirrors ...

... see our website for details on these, and other products

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Resource Reviews

First to the Top: Sir Edmund Hillary’s Amazing Everest Adventure
Written by David Hill
Illustrated by Phoebe Morris
Penguin Random House New Zealand

This non-fiction book about one of New Zealand’s most well-known and famous faces, Sir Edmund Hillary has been marketed mostly for children of primary-school age, but many of your 4-year-olds would too enjoy this story, especially those who enjoy outdoor pursuits and adventure stories.

The story begins with Edmund Hillary building rafts to explore the Waikato River as a small and shy boy. Next we learn that Edmund has grown ‘tall and strong’ and who still enjoys adventures from discovering tramping to flying planes in WWII. Then finally we met Edmund at Camp Eight on Mt Everest and we learn about his and Tenzing Norgay’s nail-biting tramp from Camp Eight to the summit on the world’s highest mountain.

This is a story about courage and determination and is another great book for encouraging children to dream big and work hard to achieve their dreams.

Piri’s Big All Black Dream
Written by Jared Bell
Illustrated by Jimmy Diaz
Penguin Random House New Zealand

This story is about All Black Piri Weepu, a boy who dared to dream big. This is an All Black Official Licensed Product and has been written to encourage young ‘Kiwi kids’ to discover their dreams and then work hard to make their dream come true.

This story is simply written and perfect to read in larger groups. This inspirational type book will encourage any child to ‘dream big’ and will no doubt engage any reader/listener who is sport mad, and especially those with a passion for rugby.

Slinky Malinki’s Cat Tales
Written & illustrated by Lynley Dodd
Penguin Random House New Zealand

This collection of cat tales brings together five favourite Lynley Dodd stories: Slinky Malinki, Slinky Malinki Open the Door, Slinky Malinki Catflaps, Slinky Malinki Early Bird and Scarface Claw.

Having just recently obtained a kitten I can see how these cat tales appeal to so many, especially those with a mischievous cat/kitten. These stories, like all of Lynley Dodd books, have the combination of playful illustrations, rhyming and fun text and sentences that roll off your tongue after a couple of reads. Lynley Dodd’s books are perfect for reading out loud together from toddlers to older preschoolers.

The Lord is My Shepherd
By Juliet David
Illustrated by Julie Clay
New Holland Publishers

This hardback book retells Psalm 23 in an accessible style for young children and follows closely the words of Scripture in the Book of Psalms offering children helpful first steps in devotion and prayer.

The simple illustrations don’t distract from the message but helps bring the meaning to life for younger listeners. Being a small book, it will be best to read one-on-one or in small groups. Like other books from this set, it’s been marketed as a gift book, with padding and silver foiling on the cover.
Oh Me, Oh My!
Written by Jill Eggleton
Illustrated by Richard Hoit
JillE Books

Oh Me, Oh My is a charming story about an unlikely pair, an elephant and a parrot, who go in search for the sun during an ongoing rainstorm.

This story is a great introduction to a range of animals, from tigers to poisonous tree frogs and is sure to keep any child entertained. The story is brought to life further with vivid illustrations by well-known illustrator Richard Hoit, a range of fonts and a fun arrangement of words that form shapes.

Jill Eggleton has included a great selection of language features such as repetition, rhyming and a load of fun adjectives.

The moral of this story is that positivity can pull you through a rough period, which is something everyone should have knowledge of, young or old.

Reviewed by Fern Anderson

Brachio
Written by Jill Eggleton
Illustrated by Richard Hoit
JillE Books

Brachio, is the story of a dinosaur who is much bigger than all his fellow dinosaurs and therefore when the moon comes out at night cannot join in on dancing without causing injury. Brachio, instead of continuing to dance, helps the smaller dinosaurs who are also at a disadvantage and provides them with a sanctuary where they are able to dance safely.

There are many books that aim to get the message across of the importance of being kind and helping others but Brachio manages to do so without being overly cheesy or predictable. Children have also shown a liking towards dinosaurs, so Brachio has the potential to be a favourite among them.

There is a strong use of onomatopoeia, Dinosaur tails went flick, flick, slap! Dinosaur teeth went snip, snip, snap! and a bright palette of colour.

Every guardian hopes to bring their child up to be kind, and what a better way to do so than by introducing kindness to them with a fun, bright story about a selfless dinosaur.

Reviewed by Fern Anderson

Wobbling Whiskers
Written by Jill Eggleton
Illustrated by Ricky Rumsey
JillE Books

Wobbling Whiskers is an engaging and enjoyable story about two mice, Big Mouse and Little Mouse who are on the hunt for food. Big Mouse is encouraging little mouse through the dangerous scavenger for food by telling her she has to be brave. But it is only after a near death situation does Big Mouse listen to Little Mouse as she says, “You can be scared sometimes.”

This book sends a strong message that people should not let their feelings be invalidated. Emotions are a natural and important part of our growth, as they let us know whether a situation is wrong or right and Wobbling Whiskers promotes this message by allowing children to know it is okay to be scared sometimes.

Jill Eggleton has once again used an array of language features including, onomatopoeia, alliteration, repetition and rhyming. Wobbling Whiskers not only validates the feelings of children, it will be sure to widen their vocabulary with words such as hoovered and scampering.

The illustrations are bright and detailed and add further humour to the story. Wobbling Whiskers is a great asset to all reading corners.

Reviewed by Fern Anderson
**Sneaky Snake**
Written by Jill Eggleton
Illustrated by Terry Fitzgibbon
JillIE Books

*Sneaky Snake* is a story about a joey, Bubba Kanga, who leans too far forward and falls out of his mother’s pouch. His mother hasn’t realised and continues to hop along. Bubba Kanga is all alone until a snake approaches and attempts to lure the joey into her cave. The birds sitting in the trees above try to alert Bubba Kanga but he remains oblivious, until finally the birds take action...

There are parts of the story that reminded me of the famous children’s book, “Are You My Mother” by P.D Eastman. The cluelessness of the joey is similar to that of the baby bird who is also completely oblivious and both are in attempt to find their mother.

The way the snake continued to try and lure Bubba Kanga away was certainly creepy. This would definitely be suspenseful for a young child, and the remarks of the joey trying to compare the snake to his mother could be considered humorous. *Sneaky Snake* may help children understand that they shouldn’t converse or go anywhere with strangers, but it remains fairly light-hearted despite the joey’s situation.

The bright and vivid illustrations by Terry Fitzgibbon and the rhyming which allows the story to flow from page to page will engage children and will definitely be a book they like to listen and look at.

Reviewed by Fern Anderson

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**Peas in a Pod**
By Tania McCartney
Illustrated by Tina Snerling
Exisle Publishing/EK Books

This book encourages individuality and children to be true to themselves.

The story begins by introducing us to quintuplets: Pippa, Pia, Poppy, Polly and Peg who do everything the same. But as these five siblings grow older, the girls start to be more individualistic. This change startles their parents who try to keep everything ‘the same’. Will the girls be able to break free and let their true personality’s blossom?

I really loved the simple illustrations that support and give further meaning to the text. This is a story that once again both children and adults can relate to. Plus it will be useful as a teaching tool to impart to young children that it’s ok to be unique and why being ‘you’ is the best thing ever.

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**Don’t Think About Purple Elephants**
By Susan Whelan
Illustrated by Gwynneth Jones
Exisle Publishing/EK Books

This beautifully illustrated picture book is a story about a young girl, Sophie, who is happy during the day when she is busy, but at night when all is calm and quiet Sophie starts to worry. Her lack of sleep causes her to have not so great days anymore, that is, till her mother comes up with a new idea...

“Go to bed, close your eyes and DON’T think about purple elephants...” So of course what happens when Sophie closes her eyes...

Although Sophie’s mother comes up with the solution, Sophie uses the idea and extends it and makes the solution her own, which is always a good resolution in a children’s book.

This book offers young readers and possibly the adults in their lives a new antidote for anxious kids and would be a great addition to any centre’s library, both in the children’s and the parents library corner.
When I am Happiest

Written by Rose Lagercrantz
Illustrated by Eva Eriksson
Gecko Press

When I am Happiest is an early chapter book for children 5-7, but with its short chapters and subtle illustrations it’s perfect to read out loud with young children who are ready to extend their literacy knowledge with longer and more complex text.

The story is a warm and heartfelt story about Dani, and how she deals with change, hardship, and fear. Troubles include her best friend moving away, the anguish of making new friends, and how she deals with her father getting injured and ending up in hospital. It’s a story about getting through the tough times and the important role friends can have. A perfect book for encouraging discussion on friendship and sadness.

We’re Going on a Moa Hunt

Illustrated by Patrick McDonald
Penguin Random House New Zealand

This retelling of an old favourite will delight all who read this book:

We’re going on a moa hunt. We’re not scared.
We’re going to catch a BIG one. We’re NOT scared!
Uh-oh . . . a tangly forest!
CRACK, CREAK, SNAP!

Join in the search! But you’ll need to keep your eyes open . . . could it be that a moa is hunting YOU?

We’re Going on a Moa Hunt is a fabulous New Zealand adventure that takes readers on an exciting journey through the country’s spectacular landscapes. Award-winning Patrick McDonald’s pictures teem with native plants and wildlife, and sharp-eyed kids will love discovering the moa cleverly hidden in every scene of the hunt.

Penguin Random House Prize Pack

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

To be in the draw to win a free pack of Penguin Random House books answer this question:

Which famous New Zealander’s story is captured in a new children’s non-fiction book and reviewed in this issue of Swings & Roundabouts?

Email your contact details and the answer to the above question to publications@ecc.org.nz by Friday 16 October 2015 and be in to win.

Competition Winner

Congratulations to the following winners who have won 5 Penguin Random House books for their ECE centre:

Kim and the kowhai team at Bright Stars, Whangarei
Francine Little, Life-start Preschool, Taita, Lower Hutt
Clint Harris, Chapel Hill Kindergarten, Rototuna, Hamilton
LAST LAUGH

Life’s Conundrums...

- Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours? They’re both dogs!
- If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what is baby oil made from?
- Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog’s face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?
- Why, Why, Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are getting dead?
- Why do banks charge a fee on ‘insufficient funds’ when they know there is not enough money?
- Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?
- Why do they use sterilised needles for death by lethal injection?
- Why doesn’t Tarzan have a beard?
- Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?
- Why do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

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