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Summer 2015



OPEN LETTER TO HON. HEKIA PARATA
INSPIRATIONAL INDOOR SPACES
MENTORING

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FROM THE *Editor*

Seasons Greetings!

December, the last month of the year, and a busy one it can be, in the lead up to Christmas. Hopefully you will have some downtime to reflect on the past year and plan for the upcoming year on what you'd like to achieve professionally and personally and of course enjoy some great company among family and friends.

“Education begins the gentleman, but reading, good company and reflection must finish him.”

- John Locke

In this issue the Early Childhood Council (ECC) has written an open letter to the Hon Hekia Parata outlining the problems the ECC would like to be addressed.

Other topics included in this issue are mentoring (two different, but thought provoking articles), an ECE centre shares their journey on 'Hiring right', another centre shares their research project on how virtues can make a difference for a successful transition from ECE to school, plus innovative ways to use technology for your business support and marketing.

Thank you to all the centres who contributed to our 'Inspirational Indoor Spaces' competition. Unfortunately we didn't have the space to showcase all centres and photos. Hopefully there will be space in our March issue to share a few more photos.

Possible topics in 2016 include:

- Was it easier to run a childcare centre 25 years ago?
- Do children learn more today under our guidance, or are we beating them down with "PC-ness"?

- Letting children take risks
- Meeting boys learning needs
- Men in ECE
- What do you do to consider how Te Whāriki is implemented effectively at your centre?

Let me know if you'd like to contribute to Swings & Roundabouts on any of the above topics or any other relevant topic important to you or your centre in regards to teaching or management.

Thank you again to all contributors who made the time to contribute to this issue and other issues throughout the year.

Trudi Sutcliffe

Editor

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CEO's Message

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) conducted recently a membership survey of 153 ECE services that revealed a terrible state of affairs for both children with special learning needs and the centres struggling to help them.

The survey was conducted in order to make a submission to Parliament's Education and Science Select Committee. The Committee was conducting, at the time, an inquiry into support for primary and secondary school students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, or autism spectrum disorders.

The ECC argued that the inquiry should consider also 'the position of children at the time of transition to school, and why they are in that position', and the Committee very kindly agreed to accept our submission.

The consequential survey results are the most troubling of any survey I have conducted as CEO of the Early Childhood Council.

Fifty-nine per cent of centres said they had to wait, on average, more than three months for 'assistance with the assessment of children you suspect to have special learning needs in relation to dyslexia, dyspraxia and/or autism spectrum disorders', and 23% said they had to wait more than six months, with six per cent told that no assessment services would be allocated.

When asked to identify the consequences of these delays more than 80% of centres indicated 'delayed development of the child/children'; 'disruption to the education and care of other children'; and 'stress for teachers'.

Hang on a minute... more than 80% of centres indicated delayed development of children!

We know that the current Government is

aware there is a problem with ECE special education services, so perhaps they have taken effective action to address it? Not according to our survey. When asked what had happened, over the past three years, 'to the quality of Ministry of Education-provided assessment services for children with special learning needs...' more than half said it was down, and only 3% said it was up.

If things are bad when it comes to assessment, maybe they get better once help arrives in the form of Education Support Workers? Not according to our survey

Ninety per cent of respondents answered 'no' when asked: 'Have you, over the past three years, always received Education Support Worker support... for the amount of time you required it?' And more than half of centres rated the quality of Education Support Workers as either 'poor' or 'very poor'.

What about ECE teachers? We know we have thousands of teachers willing to make up for the lack of government support. But are they able? Not according to our survey. Ninety per cent of survey respondents said that newly-trained teachers did not 'arrive with sufficient skills to address the needs of children with dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism spectrum disorders'. And more than 80% said there were not sufficient professional development resources available for teachers to up-skill themselves.

OK. So the Government isn't doing the job. And most teachers cannot. So what about centre management? We know that some centres make up for the lack of government funding by buying in services with their own money. Perhaps they could do more? Not according to our survey. Almost 90% of centres answered 'yes' when asked if

cuts to universal ECE subsidies since 2010 had diminished their ability to fund special education services from centre budgets.

To summarise. The Government is failing to provide the assessment and support services necessary to educate and care for children with special learning needs. Most teachers lack the specialist knowledge to do the job. And centres lack the funding to buy in services themselves.

All of which leaves with one very troubling question: Who exactly is in a position to provide effective help for all those children and their families? The answer, it appears, is very often - 'no one'.

If you care about this issue, there is something you can do. As this magazine goes to publication the Government is considering what it will and will not include in next year's Budget. I suggest you write to the Minister of Education (h.parata@ministers.govt.nz) and tell her it is time to be generous when considering the column marked 'ECE for children with special learning needs'... and should you have a story to tell of your own struggles to provide special education services, I suggest you tell it.

This is my last editorial for 2015 and a rather serious way to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. All of us on the team at the ECC do so nevertheless. We thank ECE services for your continued focus on providing the best ECE you can, and all of us here undertake to give our members the best possible support in the New Year.

Our best wishes to all.

Peter Reynolds
CEO
Early Childhood Council



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- Robyn Pearce, time management, productivity
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- Rohit Talwar, global futurist
- Christy Isbell, sensory development specialist

And more!

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 and teaching staff

Mark your diary now!

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Early Childhood Council

Open letter to *Hon. Hekia Parata*

27 October 2015

Hon. Hekia Parata
Minister of Education
Parliament



Early Childhood
Council

Dear Minister,

There has been, in 2015, a series of overwrought news stories suggesting the ECE sector is in a state of disarray. One, for example, likened early childhood centres to 'factory farming', but failed to point out that this was the comment of a single teacher in a survey of 601.

Few working day-to-day in our sector care much for news stories of this sort. One, because they defame the efforts of thousands of owners, managers and teachers. And two, because they undermine the efforts of those with less newsworthy, but more credible arguments in relation to the predicament of our sector.

We do not think, Minister, that quality of delivery is collapsing, news headline style, but we do think there is a link, for example, between cuts in the real value of universal ECE subsidies and recent concerns about quality of delivery.

What follows, Minister, is our assessment of what you might do in Budget 2016 to address the problems faced daily by those owning, managing and teaching in New Zealand's ECE centres. We have six suggestions. We do not, of course, expect you to do it all. We know Government is about balancing the worth of competing demands on the public purse. But we do ask that you try, at least, to do some of what we suggest.

Fund improvements for children transitioning from ECE to school

We believe, Minister, that there is much potential to improve transitions from ECE to school, and that there should be a special focus here on policies and practices that impact children with special learning needs, those who do not speak English as a first language, and those from Māori, Pasifika and low-income backgrounds.

We agree with your Advisory Group on Early Learning (AGEL) that transitions would be eased were primary schools to 'consider using Te Whāriki... as a framework for planning, assessing and evaluating in the first year of school'. And we agree also that 'all schools and early childhood services... (should) develop, implement and evaluate transition to school policies'.

It is in this context that we welcome the undertaking that the Ministry of Education will use the recently established 'Communities of Learning' (in the form of groupings of schools and ECE centres) to address problems with continuity of learning from ECE to school. But we remind you that this will not work if there is no funding to release ECE teachers to take part.

We suggest furthermore that the co-location of schools and ECE services offers substantial benefits for transition to school by both creating joint school-ECE communities; and facilitating socialisation to school culture, most importantly for families that might be alienated from it.

And finally, we suggest that there should be regular shared ECE-school professional development courses focused on improving transition to school processes.

Fund improvements to the implementation of Te Whāriki

We welcome, Minister, the undertaking that the Ministry of Education will update and digitise Te Whāriki, clarify the links between ECE and schooling curricula, place the documents online, and include digital links to available teaching and learning resources.

We would argue, however, that such efforts are necessary but not sufficient. We remind you that the development of Te Whāriki in the early 1990s assumed implementation in a context of comprehensive professional development - and that this has not occurred. Whatever the adequacies or inadequacies of initial teacher education (and we see many), the most pressing problem from the viewpoint of ECE centres is that professional development has withered as a result of the after-inflation cuts to universal subsidies that began with Budget 2010. And without new investment in both professional development and the non-contact time required for teachers to attend, we are unlikely, Minister, to improve substantially the implementation of Te Whāriki.

It is on the basis of this viewpoint that we support the call of the AGEL for all ECE services to 'make available teacher inquiry time equivalent to two hours non-contact time per qualified teacher per week, to support continuing professional development activities'. We would, however, oppose circumstances in which already strained ECE services were required to pay for this from existing budgets.

Fund improvements to services for children with special learning needs

An ECC survey of its membership, undertaken in September, reveals some appalling numbers in relation to the availability of support for children with special learning needs. Fifty-nine per cent of ECE centres, for example, said they had to wait three months or longer for assistance with assessment. Twenty-three per cent said they had to wait six months or longer. And when asked to identify the consequences of these deferments, more than 80% said 'delayed development for children'.

The current system is, furthermore, plagued with absurdities. Many children with special learning needs, for example, benefit if they do not move to school until they turn six. But Education Support Worker help, in their ECE centre, terminates when they turn five, and many make little progress in the absence of this support. This, Minister, is nuts.

We are aware that Group Special Education is updating across-the-sector arrangements for supporting students with special education needs, and we are hopeful the system will make more sense following this. We are 100% certain, however, that improvement is not going to happen until there is a Government Budget that announces substantial new investment. It doesn't matter how you cut the cake, Minister, the existing cake is too small.

Children with special needs in ECE centres need shorter waiting times for assessment; shorter waiting times before receiving the services of an Education Support Worker; the availability of Education Support Worker help for more than just a few hours a week; the availability of Education Support Worker help in school holidays; initial teacher training that delivers graduates competent to recognise and care for children with special learning needs; professional development for teachers who find themselves caring for children with specific special needs; and funding for the time it takes ECE teachers to visit schools in order to ease transitions.

Repair damage done when the real value of universal subsidies was cut

ECE centres have faced ongoing cuts in the real value of government subsidies. They have lost funding for the 80 to 99% and 100% qualified teacher funding bands (which stripped tens of thousands of dollars from centre budgets); the Support Grant that funded training for Provisionally Registered Teachers; and the de facto inflation indexing for universal subsidies (which means the real value of this money has fallen).

As a result centres have faced difficult choices between cutting service quality and increasing fees for families. Most have cut back on professional development, many have replaced qualified staff with the unqualified, and some have cut teacher-child ratios and services.

Most concerningly, the Government ended the equalisation payment that funded pay parity with

kindergarten teachers, when government negotiated an increase in pay rates, with the consequence that centres have been forced to fund ongoing pay rises from money that should be spent elsewhere, if they can afford increases at all.

We do not expect the full restoration of funding, Minister, but are hopeful it will not fall further, and might even be increased a tick or two. And we ask that you pay special attention to the gap that has arisen in teacher pay rate funding levels between kindergartens and education and care centres.

Require a minimum of 80% qualified teachers

The ECC thinks the current 50% minimum of qualified teachers insufficient to maximise quality. We recommend that Government require centres to have a minimum of 80% qualified teaching staff, and allow for the employment of unqualified people such as those with the community links necessary to bring at-risk families into centres; men able to add gender diversity; and non-English language speakers able to create good communication with immigrant communities.

Eliminate pockets of lower-quality regulation such as those that apply to home-based ECE services

There is, in the opinion of the ECC, too much disparity in regulated quality between home-based and centre-based services. Centre-based early childhood teachers, for example, have strict rules for the supervision of inexperienced staff and are required to have between 50% and 80% fully-qualified teachers - while one remotely-located, qualified home-based teacher (a 'coordinator') can be responsible for 20 unqualified workers in multiple locations and in charge of up to 80 licensed places.

We understand the practical and low-cost function of home-based ECE in getting childcare services to low-income, Māori and Pasifika children currently not participating, but we wonder at the fairness of a system that delivers high regulated quality to most well-off children and low regulated quality to some of our most vulnerable.

The ECC recommends therefore that Government ensure 'equivalent regulated quality' for all ECE services, and close the gap that exists between centre and home-based services; require all home-based ECE workers to have a minimum of level four qualification before starting work (introduced over time); regulate to ensure effective minimum supervision levels for home-based educators, especially junior workers; and give the Ministry of Education powers to address circumstances in which Vote Education funds inappropriate home-based services - such as au pairs doing housework.

In conclusion

We are asking that the Government:

- fund improvements for children transitioning from ECE to school;
- fund improvements to the implementation of Te Whāriki;
- fund improvements to services for children with special learning needs;
- repair damage done when the real value of universal subsidies was cut;
- require a minimum of 80% qualified teachers; and
- eliminate pockets of lower-quality regulation such as those that apply to home-based ECE services.

We understand, Minister, that it is easy to compile a wish list such as this, and hard to allocate scarce funds to competing interests. We ask, however, that you consider our arguments when assisting with the configuration of Budget 2016.

Sincerely Yours



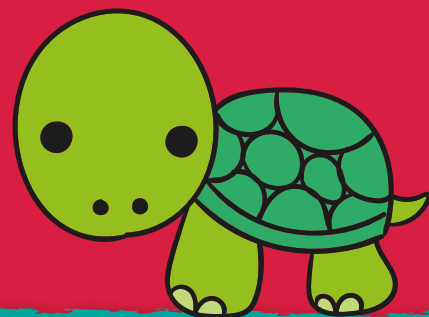
Peter Reynolds
Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Council

So you *know*

Welcome

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

- Caterpillars to Butterflies Childcare, Auckland
- St Peters Childcare Charitable Trust, Tauranga
- Kidlywinks Childcare Ltd, Upper Hutt
- High Five Early Education Centre, Wellington
- Little People Learning Centre, Auckland
- Annie's Childcare Centre, Otorohanga
- Te Hononga Puna Reo [Te Nuinga Education Trust], Auckland
- Capital Montessori School, Wellington
- Aroha Montessori, Upper Hutt
- Bayview Early Learning Centre, Auckland
- Centre Kidz Preschool, Paraparaumu
- Les Mills Early Learning Centre, Christchurch
- Lovely Lotus Childcare Centre, Palmerston North
- Tawa Montessori Preschool, Wellington
- The Little Steps, Auckland
- Cornerstone Christian Preschool, Palmerston North
- Kid's Play Ltd t/a Folkestone Street Infant & Childcare, Northshore
- Little Pioneers, Auckland
- Little Rockets Educare, Queenstown
- Murupara Educare Centre, Murupara
- Precious Papis Childcare Centre, Waimauku
- Renwick Preschool & Childcare Centre, Marlborough
- St John's Progressive Childcare Centre, Whangarei
- Te Reo Rarotonga Bi-Lingual Early Childhood Centre, Auckland
- Tower Road Christian Preschool, Matamata
- Chapel Downs Early Learning Centre, Auckland
- Fatugatiti A'oga Amata Inc Society, Papatoetoe
- Green Street Early Learning Centre, Dunedin
- Karaka Learning Centres, Papakura
- Kids World (Avondale), Auckland
- Lots of Hugs Centres, Palmerston North
- Maketu Educare, Te Puke
- Seedlings Early Learning Centre, Christchurch
- Sunnynook Community Creche, Auckland
- The Point Early childhood Centre, Auckland
- Tiny Wonders Early Learning Centre, Pukekohe
- Valleys Little Treasures, Whangarei
- Building Blocks Childcare, Kumeu
- Absolute Childcare Ltd, Wellington
- Riverhead Early Learning Centre, Albany (Provisional)
- Little Ones Garden, Auckland (Provisional)
- Old MacDonalds Rural Education & Care Centre, Hamilton (Provisional)
- St Andrews Christian Preschool, Otahuhu (Provisional)
- Ferrymead Preschool, Christchurch (Provisional)



Nelson's Long Term Plan 2015/25

Nelson's Long Term Plan for 2015/2025 has now been adopted, following consultation with the community.

Nelson City Council produces a 10 year plan which sets out all the projects and services they will deliver. This plan is reviewed and updated every three years. The 2015 - 2025 Long Term plan came into effect on the 1st July 2015.

The ECC contributed a submission supporting an exemption for early childhood education providers in the Development and Financial Contributions Policy. We are pleased that Council supports an ongoing exemption from the payment of development contribution for child care and day care centres and this has been included in the Policy which came into effect on 1 July 2015.

To read the Long Term Plan go to the below link:

<http://nelson.govt.nz/assets/Our-council/Downloads/ltp-2015-2025/LTP-2015-Long-Term-Plan-Version-6-post-adoption-15-July.pdf>

Profile: *Barbara Ala'alatoa*, Chairperson, Education Council



Barbara Ala'alatoa

It's been a big year for Barbara Ala'alatoa. The principal of Sylvia Park Primary School in Auckland's Mt Wellington has had a lot on her plate. In July she took up the position of chairperson of the new Education Council. This is the professional organisation for early childhood, primary and secondary school teachers. At the same time she still manages the demands of a busy school of over 500 students and 40 staff.

Swings and Roundabouts talked to her about her first three months as chairperson, and the opportunities that come with heading an organisation representing one of the largest professional groups in New Zealand.

So, how have the first three months been?

Incredibly busy, but in a fantastic way, which is something I know your readers know a lot about. And just like your readers I'm really motivated to do the best work I can on behalf of our children. It's a privilege to work with young people and contribute to their development.

The Education Council is a new organisation and we're in a period of development. In saying that, we are clear about our strategic intent. It'll come as no surprise to you that students are at the front and centre of the council's focus.

One of our mandates at the Education Council is to elevate the status of teachers – that means all teachers. We know there are better outcomes for students in countries where teaching is considered as desirable and prestigious as being a doctor or a lawyer. We want young people thinking about their careers to see teaching as a high status occupation – in all sectors.

Too often people think of teachers as those that work in the compulsory sector. We need to remind ourselves (and each other) that early childhood is an essential part of the educational pathway to success for our children. The evidence is clear – kids that do not access early childhood education are more educationally disadvantaged.

The other exciting news for us was the appointment of Dr Graham Stoop as chief executive of the council. Graham knows education from the ground up. He's been a teacher, a principal, the pro vice chancellor of Canterbury University, the chief executive of Christchurch College of Education and the chief executive of the Education Review Office (ERO). There are not too many people that would have the same degree of experience as Graham. He's incredibly well connected and respected. When we advertised for this position we used words like *mana* and *gravitas* – and we certainly got that! We are very excited to have him on board.

We're almost at the end of the year, what's coming up in the new year?

Our biggest priority is engaging with teachers about priorities for the new council. We will be sending out a survey asking for your feedback on this. We're very keen to work closely with you to make sure your views are heard and represented. We'll be in touch in the new year about the results of that survey.

Also, Graham will need to get his feet properly under the table – and he'll be very busy developing a plan for the organisation to progress. We're focusing on three main areas: leadership, capability and initial teacher education.

What opportunities do you see for ECE?

I'm excited about the potential that working in Communities of Learning will create for us. It will give us a flying start in the pursuit of excellent outcomes for all our children. It's a chance for all parties of our system to work together. We want children to move between learning centres well prepared for what lies ahead – no matter what school or learning centre they are attending.

Strong systems leadership is where it's at. Even the best teacher can't be the best in a vacuum. There needs to be a culture of excellence with systems that support all teachers to be the best; not just a few good teachers in a few good schools.

The opportunity for us to learn from each other is well and truly ahead of us. There's a lot we can take from each other about what great teaching and learning looks like; whether our kids are three or 16!

What are some of the issues you think our sector faces?

One of the issues for ECE, and the wider education community, is how we work together so kids have a consistently rich learning pathway that makes sense for them and their families. The challenge for ECE centres and schools is ensuring we have an understanding of what a wonderful learning pathway looks and feels like. We need to get better at talking to each other!

I think there is still an issue of status when it comes to ECE teachers. For too long there's been a belief that the older the student one teaches, the more important the teaching role. We all need to work hard to get the wider community and the profession to understand the critical role ECE plays in developing lifelong learners.

There's a longer term job to be done around educating parents to check out the qualifications of staff at ECE centres when choosing one. It's important for parents to have confidence in all parts of the education system, not just some.

And finally – what are your plans for Christmas? And any Christmas messages?

Christmas is a really good time for taking stock. I'll be doing this on a personal level, and the Education Council will too. I hope your readers do, even though many will be working over the holidays. Being reflective about what worked that year, what didn't and how things could be better, is a really useful exercise.

But it's not all business! When you work in dynamic jobs like we all do it's a time to just stop and do as little as possible. I'm looking forward to that! Like most of you, I'll be spending time with my family – my children and grandchildren – relaxing and enjoying some sun, good food and a glass of wine or two. I hope you all get to do the same. Manuia le kirisimasi!



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Partnering with Parents Evaluation Summary

"It takes a village to raise a child"

In 2011 members of the Early Childhood Council (ECC) – early childhood education (ECE) centres – asked for help in supporting their parents. In 2012, a project team was formed between the ECC (Project design, coordination and management), Plunket (Resource and personnel support) and the Ministry of Social Development – Family and Community Services team (Funding and resources).

Partnering with Parents fundamentally started with a policy question: How can we best work together to support the children we all care for? It was decided that parenting programmes tend to be based on deficit models (Sims, 2011). A programme was designed that brought together parents, health professionals and early childhood educators to find ways to work more cohesively in caring for their children. From this work would come an integrated plan – with ongoing parenting education where needed and wanted. This would be achieved by encouraging the building of a shared knowledge and experiential base amongst early childhood education centre teachers, parents and health professionals by focusing on the following five objectives:

1. Enabling the formation of reciprocal, respectful relationships between early childhood centre (ECE) staff and their families and whānau, thus strengthening the home-service link.
2. Establishing a system of parents, teachers, health professionals and other early years professionals sharing knowledge.
3. Utilising currently available parenting and teaching resources to build the ability of parent-teacher communities to care for the children in their joint care.
4. Promoting a continuous learning environment with children taking part in the conversations as appropriate.
5. Growing parent leaders who can champion parenting, thus strengthening the ECE community of families but will take the good work and messages in to the wider community.

The overall goal outcomes for *Partnering with Parents* are:

1. Increased attunement of early childhood education services and health agencies with the home/community environment;
2. Increased confidence and ability of parents to parent; and
3. Improved health and wellbeing of children.

Research shows that not only the relationship between parent and child is important to the child's development, but that the relationship of families to early childhood services is also of great importance. Strong relationships open the way for a free flow of information in both directions.

Partnering with Parents emulates a virtual community hub and is a shift away from a mechanical approach of applying techniques and methods to a problem to solve. Instead participants whose lives are most affected by the issue are invited to come together to share what they each bring (interweaving). This concept is central to the underlying principles of Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996), the early childhood education curriculum, based on empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships. This project also brought together other early years professionals, particularly health professionals, to strengthen the networks amongst all those supporting parents.

The evaluation report has examined the outcomes of three phases of implementation (Spiral One, Two and Three) of the *"Partnering with Parents"* programme, which has been successfully implemented in 17 early childhood centres. The evaluation demonstrates that a comprehensive and accessible *Partnering with Parents* tool kit can be applied universally at a relatively low cost, is home-grown, and can be easily contextualised to suit specific groups such as for Māori parents and whānau as well as Pasifika parents and extended families. This will be made available to Early Childhood Council (ECC) Members. The full evaluation will be available soon at www.ecc.org.nz.

'A child's life is like a mat where everyone weaves a strand.'



Family Speak In One Ear



Teachers Speak in Other Ear



*When what the child hears is in tune,
the child smiles.*

Acknowledgements

This evaluation report has been jointly prepared by Laree Taula, Early Childhood Council and Professor Claire McLachlan, Massey University Institute of Education. Laree and Claire would like to acknowledge the support of the following people and groups:

1. Peter Reynolds, CEO, Early Childhood Council.
2. Lorraine Tarrant, Lead Advisor, Child Development and Parent Support, Family and Community Services, Ministry of Social Development (MSD).
3. Claire Rumble, National Community Development Manager, and Regan Mayo, National S.K.I.P Leader (Strategies with Kids, Information for Parents), The Royal New Zealand Plunket Society.
4. The many centres, staff and parents who agreed to participate in the trials.
5. The facilitators who worked to ensure *Partnering with Parents* was positive for parents, ECE staff, and all who were involved.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the late Dr Elizabeth Clements who designed the *Partnering with Parents* initiative from its conception. She believed in educating individuals, whānau and other groups, organisations and neighbourhoods, cities and countries about socially sustainable systems by:

- Using research, reflection, meditation and accumulated wisdom
- Teaching an organic approach to social change based on constructive and inclusive ideas about power and knowledge
- Focusing on balance – visualising the world as a complete system with many different parts that need to be in balance for the wellbeing of people, animals, plants and all living forms
- Educating individuals, groups and others through a website, education programmes, writings, and practical support and advice.

A Mother's Story

The following story demonstrates the importance of breaking down barriers between health, education and home in the early years of a child's life. It also encourages those of us working in ECE, regardless of our centre philosophy or service type, to reflect on the question – "What is effective parent engagement and why is it important?"



By Diana Cruse

My philosophies on engagement began to form a while back. I vividly remember being a nervous 3-year-old, starting my first day at Frankton Kindergarten in Hamilton and having Cornelia the kindy teacher enter my life. I'd never left my mother before, but Cornelia was right beside me throughout my entire early childhood education. Some of my favourite early childhood memories were sitting next to Cornelia as I did marble paintings, feeling like the most important person in the world.

She also included my entire whānau in my kindergarten journey. She had a relationship of trust with my mother especially; I remember them talking together a lot. I remember beaming with pride on our dress up evening when my whānau came to my kindergarten and I was able to show them around.

As educators, we would've said she was building responsive and reciprocal relationships, forming collaborative partnerships and creating meaningful engagement with whānau and community. As a three year old, I simply called this being nice.

Fast forward years later and I had my own infant and toddler. I was a young mum, living in a new community and I had spent that morning crying. I felt lonely and isolated and I wasn't sure what to do. And then my supervisor from Playcentre turned up on my doorstep. I had stopped going to Playcentre as I'd struggled looking after a toddler and infant by myself, not realising that I could've asked for help. But she turned up – a smiley face, "just popping in to say hi and to drop off some paintings".

When she turned up, I felt like she was my miracle. I returned to Playcentre and became actively engaged in the centre and it

was the best thing for myself and my boys – they got to experience quality early childhood education and I got out of the house!

It was also through Playcentre where I discovered my love for early childhood education and went on to train as an early childhood teacher. Playcentre became our second home. I developed some of my closest friendships and created a support network for myself and my children – a network that I still rely on to this day.

I share a story, again from my own parenting years, from the day of my middle son's 7th birthday. Excitedly, I had made cupcakes for him and his classmates.

That morning I took the cupcakes over to my son's classroom. I walked in and noticed the district health nurse in the classroom. She didn't know me, but I was aware of who she was. I had heard her speak at public hui about engagement. "But why won't they engage?" she had lamented.



Like this supervisor, we [teachers] can also be miracles in the lives of the families we work with through simple acts of caring.

Whilst I have been fortunate to have had inspirational teachers throughout mine and my children's lives, I have also experienced hurt as a result of un-meaningful engagement as well.

She instantly looked at my chocolate iced cupcakes and then looked at me with a look of judgement and disdain. My son was beaming with excitement as he and his best friend handed the cupcakes out. They offered one to her as well. She replied with an abrupt "no. I don't eat that. There's too much sugar in there". She was looking at me when she said it. That message was for me.

Continued over page >

She could've just said, "no, thanks". Instead, she decided to use that moment as a teaching moment to share her message of health to the young mum, wearing jeans with paint on them.

Yes, I still consider myself a young-ish mum. I am also a single mum. I am Māori. My income isn't expansive.

So I am a young, single, low income, Māori mum. I am what you would classify as the 'target population'.

Numerous policies that the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development has designed, has been aimed at engaging and targeting 'me'.

I did not need that nurse's message the first time we met and I certainly wasn't going to listen after that. I wanted her joy for my son's birthday. If she had taken a moment to get to know me, she would've learnt that

I understand health and I make cupcakes about 3 times a year – normally for each birthday. And my jeans were covered in paint because I was a supervisor at an early childhood centre and I was on my break.

Not that my profession and education should not make a difference in how I am treated. It shouldn't matter if I dropped out of school when I was 15 or if I have my Doctorate. Respect, courtesy and inclusiveness should be universal.

Later when I came home that day, I wrote about that experience and sent it off to my thesis supervisor. But a lot of people would just simply choose to disengage and then talk to their friends and family about it, who then would also choose to disengage and instantly – we have certain groups of the community who are unwilling to engage.

Millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent, trying to engage 'me'. But to be honest, all I need is just some common courtesy.

So, to that public health nurse that lamented, "but why won't they engage?" I challenge her to re-word that question and ask "why am I making it so hard for others to engage with me?"

My tip to her: get to know me first, before you make assumptions about what messages my whānau and I need.

About the author

Diana Cruse is an early childhood teacher and is finishing off her thesis for her Masters of Education. Diana also runs a company that offers PD, research and event management for the ECE community. Diana lives in the Wairarapa and has three children.

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Why virtues matter and how they support transition to school



By Latoya Reihana

What is it that makes for a successful transition from early childhood education into school? Peters 2010, shares "research shows no matter how academically capable a child is, unhappiness over lack of friends, problems in the playground or toilets....low expectations and so on, have negative consequences for their learning" (p.1). If academic skill acquisition does not guarantee a smooth transition into school, what should we as early childhood professionals be focusing on if we truly and authentically aim to develop lifelong learners who transition well between educational settings?

The recent introduction of national standards in education has further confirmed that what counts as meaningful learning, and how this is measured is subject to continuous political change. While some centres may adopt an academic approach to early learning on the basis of this framework, our research suggests this would be of little if any benefit. Claxton and Carr (2002) reiterate that "The fundamental purpose of education for the 21st Century... is not so much the transmission of particular bodies of knowledge, skill and understanding as facilitating the development of the capacity and the confidence to engage in lifelong learning." Surely then, one leading aspect of our role is to build upon learning capacity, which will enable children to *go the distance* throughout various educational settings and structures.

The Bay of Plenty Polytechnic Early Childhood Centre recently conducted an extensive research project, with the intention of exploring 'the usefulness of a virtues-based programme for supporting children's

transition into school learning'. Consisting of a group of eight teachers, our research team branched out to seek an understanding of the aspirations, thoughts, and perspectives from participants which included early childhood teachers, new entrant teachers and parents of children who had recently transitioned from our centre into school. While our research endeavoured to seek a broad and in-depth understanding of the wider picture of transition, of particular interest was the influence a virtues-based programme may contribute as children transition to school.

Philosophically aligning with the holistic nature of our national early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, the virtues based programme operating within our centre provides an inclusive framework for character development based on a foundation of care and respect. Integrating credit-based language and teaching strategies the virtues-based programme supports growth and development of the virtues all children inherently possess. One question our team contemplated whilst approaching our research was; with the understanding that our virtues based programme effectively nurtures children's development of positive social skills and self-concepts within our centre environment, does this continue to be something that contributes to children's learning and development beyond our centre?

For those new to the philosophy of virtues our particular programme is based on the Virtues Project (1991), but adapted to meet the needs of our context. The Virtues Project was initiated in an effort to "empower families and individuals to live by their deepest values" (Virtues Project Aotearoa). We are all familiar with virtues in one sense or another,

"patience is a virtue" rings bells for most. We have also probably heard an utterance every now and then of "what is happening to the world...", or "back in my day" suggesting there is something missing from modern society which was perhaps more prominent in days gone by. Virtues are an extensively researched list of common elements found to be of importance on a universal scale, irrespective of cultural or religious background and The Virtues Project provides a framework for teaching these virtues.

Findings within our research have emphasised that while a basic level of academic skills are understood to give children some confidence coming into school, virtues are something that can be of great value when children enter new entrant classrooms. To our surprise the value new entrant teachers placed upon virtues surpassed the value they had placed upon skills. Feedback from early childhood teachers and parents of recently transitioned children followed this trend also. The discovery that virtues were deemed more important than skills were accentuated further through comments shared by participants:

"My son was really prepared for school, he was socially and emotionally ready for the next step." - Early childhood teacher/parent

"There are certain things you want children to know, like virtues, key competencies, whatever you call them, there are certain things teachers recognise as being really important."

- New entrant teacher

"I mean at the end of the day, its great these children who come in and can do all these



academic things...but if they don't know that stuff, and they come in, they can be responsible for themselves, they respect other people, they will progress anyway."-New entrant teacher

"They (virtues) are fundamentals for life..."
-Parent

The Education Review Office found within their transition to school research "early childhood services that effectively supported children's transition to school had a strong focus on children's dispositional learning, independence and social competence" (P. 27). The responses and feedback gathered throughout our research reassured that

children who had transitioned from our centre into schools adjusted well and virtues were recognised as supportive factors in these findings. Feedback from participants highlighted the social and emotional benefits of a virtues based programme, such as the transmission of skills and attributes which will enable children to function well within society. Wouldes, Merry, and Guy share within Glukman's (2011) report "social and emotional competence is one of the most important developmental objectives for successful transitions throughout the lifespan."

While this report points to infant/caregiver attachments as central to the formation of these skills, it also notes a lifespan approach to transition, highlighting the early childhood stage as pivotal to improving outcomes further on. Early transitions are further understood to play a significant role in life-long development by Margetts (1997) who advises that adequate adjustment in children's first year of school influences future progress. While our research focused predominantly on children's transition into school, findings such as those shared by Glukman's report make it plausible to assume a virtues based programme may have more impact and longevity further down the lifespan than solely the transition to school process.

An overwhelming number of participants in our research hailed a virtues based programme as something that is not only relevant within the school environment and wider community, but desirable too. Skills, it seems are of low relevance when considering the wider context of transition to school, as academic learning only accounts for one small aspect of this process. Our research has found it is of greater value that children arrive at school with capabilities in managing themselves, in interacting positively with others, and in demonstrating a positive attitude towards learning. As shared by one new entrant teacher "So, I know that there are some teachers, even in our school, that say 'oh, they've got to know the alphabet by the time they come to school. I'm like, 'no they don't, that's our job!'"

About the author

Kia ora, my name is Latoya Reihana. I have worked at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, Early Childhood Education Centre for seven years and I currently hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. I have submitted this article on behalf of our research team.

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Inspirational indoor spaces

Congratulations to Seedlings Preschool, Christchurch who won the ECC Inspirational Indoor Spaces Competition. *(Unfortunately we didn't have the space to share all images sent in, but we're hoping to share more in the March issue.)*

“Education means inspiring someone's mind, not just filling their head.” – Katie Lusk

Seedlings Early Learning Centre and it's magical arts room, Christchurch

Welcome to our arts room, where our children enjoy discovering the magic in everyday things and experiences. This area of play and learning has been inspired by our centres philosophical approach and vision to provide beautiful spaces that engage and provoke children's thinking. The children at Seedlings Early Learning Centre enjoy discovering arts through their interests, both exploring and interpreting the possibilities of different art forms.

Our teachers appreciate the capabilities of our children and place value in their creations, and learning alongside the children. Members of our whānau take time to enjoy this space also and engage and share their cultural interests and expertise in the arts alongside our children.



My Treehut Learning Centre, Taupo

We are inspired by the love of natural and authentic resources and equipment that we all share.

Our family area use real church pews as dividers and authentic equipment to play with. Our whānau and tamariki enjoy having tea parties or picnics here, getting dressed up to go on adventures or taking the babies for a stroll in our vintage push chairs.

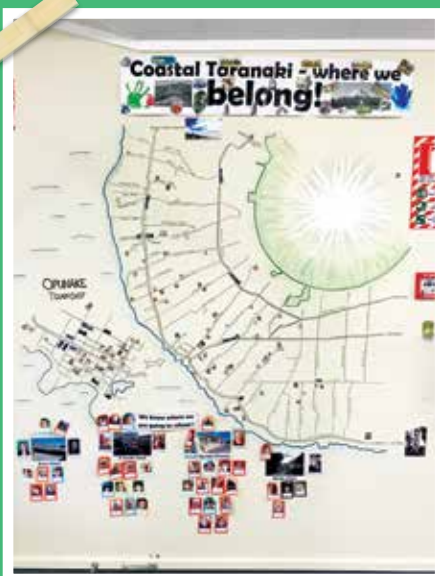
Then we have a "Foot Spa" area for relaxing. Our tamariki love relaxing here, soaking their feet in warm soapy water and having a chat to their friends. We have a nice scented candle on, relaxing music playing and comfortable seating for an authentic, relaxing experience.



Wa Ora Montessori Preschool, Naenae, Lower Hutt

The practical life area is the foundation of the Montessori environment. For new tamariki, it is a place that feels very familiar to them as they have probably experienced helping their whānau at home. The main feature of practical life is that the materials are real and purposeful, such as sharp knives for cutting vegetables and glass jugs for pouring water. In this area children are able to develop their concentration, independence and coordination as they play with the activities with all equipment being child size. Children enjoy this area and return to it throughout their preschool years. Whānau and observers are always amazed to see how capable such young tamariki are.





Opunake Kindergarten

We have a large hand-made wall map on our dining room wall, that has all the Kindy children, the Kindy staff and many local place photos (like schools and supermarkets) on it to show where we all live and visit.

This map came about as a result of our Induction and Transition into Kindy self-review. The idea was to create a resource to encourage conversation about where we live, and how we all belong to and are a part of our wider community.

The results have been awesome. The children love it and are often standing in

front of it exclaiming that they live on that road, they discover that other children and teachers live on their road (or close by) and they talk about who and where they go and visit - often tracing the roads they take to get there.

We also included our 'Who's going to which school' wall below the map, so that we can look at and have conversations about the different schools in the area, and who is going where. The children's photos in this area are all well 'dog-eared' from all the handling they get.

We always get favourable comments from family's and visitors to Kindy, who love the idea, and often spend time standing in front of it to take the map in.



St Heliers Little School, Auckland

After attending an inspiring professional development course on ephemeral art, I decided I would like to try including more natural resources in the preschool's environment.

The kōwhiri provocation on the light table was inspired by the kōwhiri patterns the children were exploring at an art table. One of the designs incorporated in kōwhiri is the kōwhiri shape. I wanted to provide another medium for the children to explore Maori designs, while also providing the opportunity for them to explore where these designs come from in nature.



Little Orchard Preschool, Whakatane

This is a new area started by our children bringing the natural environment inside to play with. We have extended on this to include a lovely birch branch that was cut and sanded for little hands along with small rounds of wood and many natural oddments found outside. The tamariki then select models to extend their play or just sort into groups, take part in different seriation tasks or just feel the textures. It's really loved by all.



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focused on practical outcomes for students to implement in early childhood contexts.

The new qualifications have been widely welcomed by the sector as new coursework options to add to the current postgraduate provision for the ECE profession, while assisting with pathways to further study research and enhance career progression. NZTC's unique delivery of qualifications has been praised for providing further opportunities for professionals to balance their work and study commitments.

"NZTC continues to assess the needs of the early childhood sector and the best ways

to support these. We are excited to offer a new Master of Early Childhood Education by coursework and Postgraduate Certificate in Leadership and Management qualification in support of our profession. We look forward to meeting with students in the coming months to discuss these new options," commented NZTC Chief Executive Selena Fox.

NZTC will begin delivering these qualifications in February 2016 (final NZQA approval pending). For more information about these exciting new postgraduate study options, please visit www.nztertiarycollege.ac.nz or call (09) 520 4000 / (03) 366 8000.





NZTC supports development of sector leaders at ECC Conference



The 2015 Early Childhood Council Conference in Queenstown inspired the early childhood sector with speakers full of fresh ideas, timely topics, rich information sessions and networking opportunities to meet the leaders of the ECE field.

New Zealand Tertiary College (NZTC) was proud to assist this event by supporting Roger Neugebauer from The World Forum Foundation to attend the conference. NZTC Chief Executive Selena Fox thanked the ECC for the opportunity provided by

the conference, "to learn from national and international voices, reflect on our professional roles that impact on children's lives and consider new thoughts forward. In our busy schedules these times are rare, yet critical to nurture ourselves for the children, families and team members we work with each day," said Fox.

To support the early childhood community and the ECC conference NZTC gifted a one year postgraduate scholarship opportunity worth over \$6,600 to an early childhood centre who attended the conference and entered the draw. The lucky winner was Carol Bull from The Tot Spot Early Learning Centre in Greerton. Carol was extremely excited to win the scholarship and is looking forward to commencing her study towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (ECE).

"I was absolutely ecstatic when I got the news. I can only compare it with winning the lottery!" said Bull.

After working in the early childhood sector for 26 years, both in New Zealand and in the UK where she was born, Carol is excited to use the scholarship opportunity to further her professional achievements, goals and growth.

"In turn I can share this knowledge with my team to help shape, inspire and enhance

the centre. Research indicates that effective leadership is the key element of effective early childhood provision," she said.

A natural rapport and love for children was inherent in Carol from a young age, so a career in early childhood education was an instinctive career choice for her. As a teacher, team leader and centre Second in Charge, Carol juggles many hats in her everyday work.

"I have to be mindful that when I'm on the floor I'm completely present. I'm a teacher and I therefore must be engaged with the children and providing them with my full attention, not thinking about rosters and staffing," she said.

When asked what she most enjoys about working in ECE Carol explained, "I enjoy the fact that no day is ever the same. There is no Groundhog Day for an ECE teacher. I particularly appreciate the importance of the relationships with our families, sharing their aspirations for their children's care and education, and being a part of their learning journey."

If you're interested in furthering your career with postgraduate study, contact the NZTC Enrolments Team at enrolments@nztertiarycollege.ac.nz or (09) 520 4000 / (03) 366 8000.



What *good* mentors do

By Barbara Watson

Recently there has been an increasing focus on the role of those working alongside others, both new and more experienced teachers, in a mentoring capacity. In New Zealand, this has taken the form of the Education Council (previously the Teachers Council) expressing strong and clear expectations about the induction and mentoring of teachers who are new to the profession and for the on-going mentoring of all teachers. *Professional learning journeys: Guidelines for induction and mentoring and mentor teachers* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011), hereafter referred to as the Guidelines, describe what a good programme to support newly qualified teachers should look like and paints a picture of the role of the mentor in this process.

The role of mentor teachers during the period of provisional certification is to support the development of “effective teachers for diverse learners” and “professionally engaged teachers committed to on-going inquiry into their own teaching and working with colleagues in a collaborative process” (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011). With this vision in mind, it is clear that there are some key skills that good mentors need to have. These include being: effective teachers of diverse learners, culturally competent, committed to their own on-going learning, reflective, able to inquire into the effect of their own teaching and able to work collaboratively with others. Not only do they

need to exhibit these qualities of a highly effective teacher themselves but they also need to have the desire and skill to support others develop their capabilities in these domains as well.

Traditional types of mentoring often take and advice and guidance approach (Langdon, 2013; Williams, 2015). Indicators of this approach include giving emotional or humanistic support and providing technical support such as ‘tips and tricks’, quick fixes and advice (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011). Although all of these strategies have a place in the mentor’s repertoire, they are not sufficient to develop the autonomous, self-motivated and reflective professional that is the expected output of an induction and mentoring programme. In order to develop the type of teacher we need in the profession mentors need to work in educative ways.

The skills, knowledge and dispositions required of an educative mentor are outlined on pages 24-26 of the Guidelines (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011). They include such things as: being able to give effective feedback on teaching practice, analysing evidence of learner outcomes, the ability to conduct evidence-based learning conversations and the ability to build reflective capability in others. Many of the experienced teachers who are mentoring others find themselves in that role by default rather than by conscious career choice. They

may have been the only fully certificated teacher in the centre and fall into the role because it is associated with another leadership role such as head teacher or supervisor. This seems to assume that any experienced teacher has the ability to mentor well. This is not necessarily the case.

International research clearly identifies the capabilities and competencies of mentoring as different, albeit related, to those of good teaching. Recent New Zealand-based research in both the early childhood and primary sectors points to the fact that those moving into the role of mentor find it challenging to adopt educative approaches (Langdon, 2013; Williams, 2015). In Williams (2015) study of early childhood mentors she found that, despite mentors being aware of the Guidelines (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011) mentors relied heavily on advice and guidance approaches. Most of their interactions with their provisionally certificated teachers (PCTs) were either providing humanistic/emotional support, describing practice or giving suggestions and solutions. These findings were echoed in some of the early childhood case studies that were carried out as part of the recent evaluation of the Guidelines (Cameron et al., 2014).

These findings beg the question: How do those in mentoring roles develop the capability to mentor well? The Guidelines

state that "on-going support systems and professional development opportunities for mentor teachers should be established" (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011).

With a few exceptions, most of which involve study at post-graduate level, there are not many opportunities for mentors to engage in professional learning specific to the mentoring role. As a result, many mentors rely on the approaches that they experienced during their own provisional period (Watson, In progress). These approaches are often advice and guidance rather than educatively focused.

Effective mentors engage in professional learning about and inquiry into their mentoring practice. This may involve attending a mentor development programme, undertaking postgraduate study, reading literature focused on educative mentoring and networking with others in similar roles to analyse, critique and strengthen practice. The recent publication *Mentoring in early childhood education* (Murphy & Thornton, 2015) is a valuable New Zealand-based addition to the professional learning kete of mentor teachers as it includes a wide range of chapters covering topics such as becoming

an effective mentor, mentoring for diverse and priority learners, awakening passion and the links between mentoring and appraisal.

One strategy that may be helpful in supporting mentors make the shift to educative approaches has been identified in my PhD research currently underway (Watson, In progress). Two of the mentors in my study identified that their mentoring practice could be enhanced by applying the principles of effective ECE pedagogy. For example, using a credit-based approach would mean that they would identify teachers' strengths/interests and use them to develop areas that are not so strong. Using a learner-centred pedagogy would mean that the teacher would drive the induction and mentoring programme rather than the mentor. Using inquiry approaches would mean that the mentor would assist the PCT to identify and pursue their own learning goals rather than provide answers and direction. Being reflective would mean that mentors actively reflect on and refine their mentoring practice as well as their teaching practice.

In summary, good mentors are skilled in both teaching and mentoring roles. They

actively strive to develop their mentoring practice and seek evidence about their effectiveness as mentors. This effectiveness may be measured by the extent to which they adopt educative approaches in order to develop teachers to be autonomous, reflective, collaborative professionals who are, in turn, able to effectively support the learning of all children.

About the author

Barbara is a facilitator and director for inspirED ECE who are the ECC's preferred providers of teacher workshops. She has a wide range of experience as a teacher and leader in ECE and has a passion for the developing teacher. Her role as a facilitator includes mentoring and appraising centre leaders and teachers, whole centre PLD and workshops. Barbara has recently had chapters published in two books and is currently undertaking her PhD with a focus on mentoring in education and care centres.

For further information about mentor development programmes or mentor teacher networks please contact Barbara on barbara@inspired-ece.co.nz.

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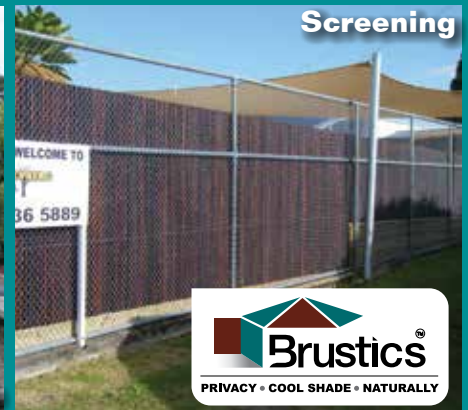
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How to get the (very) best out of *mentoring*



By Phil Sales

Many years ago, in a previous career-life, I ran the Wellington Citizens Advice Bureau.

WelCAB was an interesting diversion for me, as it brought together two areas in which I have a deep interest: Business and the not-for-profit sector. It was also a massive challenge, as I had to convince a number of dedicated not-for-profit people that 'business' wasn't a dirty word and that they would not die if we became more business-focussed.

It also introduced me to a new vocabulary: One of my branch managers kept asking me for 'supervision'.

At first, I couldn't quite make it out. She was reasonably competent at what she did and I certainly didn't feel that I needed to watch over her work. Then it gradually dawned on me that what she was talking about was what I knew as 'mentoring'.

Regardless of whether you prefer the term 'supervision' or 'mentoring', you will no doubt understand the concept and some of the benefits that we expect from this activity.

Mentoring allows people the opportunity to seek different perspectives, to safely test out new ideas and to draw on other people's experiences and knowledge. Mentors are also useful as career guides and champions.

However, it is possible that our 'popular' understanding of mentoring can hold us back from realising the full range of benefits that mentors have to offer.

Let me try making some predictions about your current mentoring situation.

Prediction #1: You probably only have one person who you regard as an assured mentor (think 'trusted confidant' here rather than 'close friend' or 'coffee buddy' and remember that this is as much a professional relationship as a personal one).

Prediction #2: You have relied on this person for many years and wouldn't dream of insulting them by looking elsewhere for trusted advice on sensitive issues.

Prediction #3: This person is very similar to you (or to how you see yourself being at some stage in the future).

If I was a betting man (which I am not) then I would think that I hit the mark with these predictions more times that I miss.

Why would I say this?

Well, to start with, we usually need to feel deep affinity with someone in order to share our deeper feelings with them and to trust their judgement. We all lead busy lives and our time is at a premium. And let us not forget that we probably chose our mentor on the basis of knowledge of the sector that we are working in.

Now, let me suggest to you that this is a very limited way of looking at mentoring and that you can probably enrich your experience as a 'mentoree' by tweaking the mentoring model to fit your particular needs.

Back in the days when I was involved in the Business Mentors New Zealand programme (www.businessmentors.org.nz), we had a rule that you could only have one mentor at a time. You were given a mentor (you didn't choose this person) and you were restricted to between 3 and 5 visits. After that time (if you had done as you were told) you would have taken on-board everything that the mentor could provide you with. If you wanted another mentor then you had to close off with your current mentor and part from them on good terms (that is to say, the exiting mentor had to give you a good reference and say that you had behaved yourself!).

This system had some obvious drawbacks, not the least of which was the prescriptive nature of the mentoring model used. Just imagine being told by someone else who your friends / doctor / accountant / spouse would be!

In reality, an effective mentoring relationship needs to be far more flexible and client-focussed than this. In some cases, you might find it helpful to have multiple mentors who you can call on as the situation dictates. Not only does this avoid possibly skewed advice but it can provide you with a wealth of different perspectives (more on that later).

It also means that you can pick the best person to go to for advice. If you need a

heart-to-heart about a workplace issue then a mentor who is currently managing an early childhood centre may be a better choice than a long-retired teacher who trained you 30 years ago!

Some commentators suggest that increasing complexity and the speed-of-change mean that we should start thinking of our mentors as a Board of Directors, each one of them with a particular portfolio of responsibility. Depending on your situation, you might have different mentors for industry, organisational, inter-personal, technology, work-life and career issues. (I can hear the overworked cynics in the room saying that a mentor-to-advise-on-mentors might not be a bad idea!)

Regardless of the merits of this expert opinion, do think carefully about your situation and the sort of skills and knowledge that you need access to. Do you want solutions-to-problems or a sympathetic shoulder to cry on? Similarly, do you need someone who is familiar with the nuances and intricacies of your current situation or someone who can cast a detached and critical eye over proceedings?

At different times our needs may change quite dramatically and it is infinitely better to have 'the right person available' rather than 'the only person available'! So where do we find these people and how do we build a mentoring relationship with them?

Potential mentors are all around us. In principle, there are eight billion other people in the world who you can learn from. Realistically, only a very small percentage of these people are potentially available and interested. However, that still leaves a significant number of people to choose from and our daily familiarity with email and skype services means that many of them are readily accessible.

If you are old enough to remember 'the good old days', then you might recall once having a pen pal who you kept in touch with by snail mail. Now think about that overseas professor who you met at a conference, or the expert who you struck up a friendship with online or the blogger you read each

week. These people may either be a good source of mentoring or they might be able to introduce you to other people within their networks who can help.

Closer to home, you can easily expand your pool of potential mentors by attending events, assisting with community projects or even meeting people at parties. Know what you need and keep looking for opportunities.

When you do find a mentor then think about the type of mentoring that you will probably need. Is it a formal, semi-formal or informal relationship? Is it regular and long-term or limited to a particular project or task? Is the relationship intended to be one-way or to the benefit of both parties?

Generally speaking, you will almost certainly get the best from your mentor if the relationship is reciprocal. That is to say, the mentor needs to feel engaged as much as you do. The most engaged mentors passionately want to help you (rather than being a dispassionate sounding-board) and

they are willing to champion successful outcomes for you. It is this sort of patron-protégé relationship that leads to strong outcomes for both parties.

Earlier in this article, I promised that I would make further comment about the value of different perspectives. We already know that most people choose mentors who they share similarities with, such as professional background or world-view. At the same time, we also know that there is tremendous value in diversity.

Unfortunately, there is very little **real** diversity when all of our mentors come from the same socio-economic block, live in a similar suburb, come from a similar type of academic training institution and work in the same industry. This is where we need to break free from group-think mentality and start thinking-outside-the-box!

So my challenge to you is this: If you want to reap the benefits of true diversity in a mentoring relationship then see whether

you can find at least one person with uncomfortably challenging views who you are prepared to engage with on a respectful and courteous basis. See whether you can grow a relationship with that person in which you are exposed to perspectives that you wouldn't otherwise come across and be truly open in your consideration of their views. See whether your new mentor can teach you new things, open up possibilities that you never seriously considered before and push the boundaries of your own self-development!

After all, that's what mentoring is all about!

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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Hiring right – *A centre's journey*

Hiring is a complex and vital process in the running of your organisation, and should not be underestimated in the value it can provide versus the damage it can do to the culture of your centre and the wellbeing of your teams. Fiercely protective of our positive culture, and our commitment to providing a safe and happy work environment for our teams to optimise performance and delivery of programmes, we have changed our approach to getting to know prospective employees.

Having completely lost faith in the interview process that is full of stress and variables that do not provide a true picture, we now approach hiring from a completely different perspective, and employ an 'audition process' instead!

We apply the same principals to our staff as we do to our littlest learners, simply that everyone shines in their own different way - the whakatauki we have at the entrance to our building is "Highlight my strengths and my weaknesses will disappear." As with exams - excellent students can perform poorly under the pressure of time constraints and the stress of a potentially negative outcome. Excellent teachers can interview poorly, or put together a substandard Curriculum Vitae, and slip through the cracks of your good judgement. Conversely, a teacher you do not want in your teams in the long term can interview well, tell you exactly what you want to hear, and have a stunning CV. Our emphasis is not on the qualification, or even the experience, although these are definitely a bonus!

Our belief is that the teacher toolkit can always be extended, our expectations can be

taught, experience can be gained with time, and the 'right person' can be moulded to fit us. But getting the 'right person'? That's not about existing qualifications or experience, it is simply about being a good person. A genuine, caring person with a passion for teaching and learning, an ability to be a team player, the motivation to develop themselves on an ongoing basis and a personality that our current teams will embrace. Being a good person is innate, it's either there or it's not. Someone who doesn't fit with your centre cannot be taught to fit, and if they are allowed to remain regardless, the outcome to your base staff happiness and thus quality of programme can be devastating and difficult to repair.

Who better to choose their next teacher than the children? Children can see that innate goodness in a person in a heartbeat. They are incredible judges of character, and you will all have watched the phenomenon of children swarming to a warm teacher with the natural ability to engage and create relationships, or give a wide berth to someone who doesn't really 'get' them. And who better to have input in the next team member but the team themselves? Fun on the floor is essential. Is this someone we can enjoy? What do they bring? Can I form a solid and trusting relationship with this person? Our hiring has become a 'whole team' process.

To answer these vital questions in a tangible way, the teacher that comes in to apply for a position at our centre comes in to audition. They will spend time on the floor. They will be observed by the teachers they would potentially work with and myself as to how

they engage with both children and staff. The value of this time far outweighs any interview process. We attempt to make this more than once, but this can be difficult for a teacher who is already employed, or is coming to us out of district. We pay this teacher as a reliever to ensure we are seeing them function as they believe we would expect a team member to, and taking full responsibility.

Despite a great CV, someone who can only offer us interview time will rarely get an interview, as we have completely lost faith in this process in favour of this much more robust system of hiring. Yes, we have the three month opt out clause in our contracts, but who wants to play that card? There's the high risk that damage will still get done whilst discovering that person isn't right, damage both to your organisation and to the new employee. Much better to take some serious time making sure you have that 'right person' in the first instance. We all want to spend a lot of years working alongside that new teacher! We are hugely proud of our environment and our programmes and what we offer to children and their families - winning the position to work with us is a privilege not to be taken lightly. Team teaching is about interdependence, a combined wonderfulness of everyone's strengths, and our successes belong to us all.

by Jo Maddison

About the author

Jo Maddison is the Managing Director from Little Einsteins, a Centre with an environmental focus in rural Cambridge.

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Expectations - It's a two way street

By Warren Sare, National Manager – Franchise, Group & Associations- BNZ

So what should you should expect from your bank, and what will they want to see in return?

Let me start by wishing you all the best for the coming holidays, each year seems to fly past and I have no doubt for many in the education sector the upcoming consecutive period of down time is highly valued. I spend a large amount of time talking to business owners and one of the things I've come to realise is that while Christmas and New Years are 'R & R time', there is also a period of 'arggggh' as thoughts inevitably return to business for owners and managers, or perhaps in the case of many readers the completion of business, lesson and activity plans.

There are some common themes that come out of this period, often due to the fact trusted family and friends are around and can act as a bit of a sounding board for people who either :

- Desire to buy/ own their own business
- Desire to grow an existing business
- Desire to better control and govern their business

Each of those aspects can take you down different pathways, but one of the most important relationships to form or strengthen will likely be with your Bank.

Having clear expectations and developing a strong relationship is one of best moves you can make. I've tried to cover off what you can expect of your bank, and conversely what is not unreasonable for a bank to expect of you as for many, asking for or restructuring funding can be a real challenge.

What's fair to expect from your potential bank?

"Why should I choose you over your competitors? "

This is a common question that is often asked of lenders by potential clients, and one that requires some explanation. Clients ask for different reasons, so while this line of questioning is more often than not price driven, emphasis should be placed on the total relationship, not just the immediate and often minimal initial saving. Buying a business is a serious commitment, and decisions need to be based on both present and future needs.

Ideally your relationship with your bank should be a partnership offering mutual benefit to all parties. Your banker should become a trusted financial advisor, someone with whom you feel comfortable discussing all aspects of your business. You should feel that you are being given honest advice that is relevant to the local business environment.

What is often overlooked is the importance of specialised advice within business banking. Many industries have a number of complexities which make them a proposition that requires an understanding of the business model and the market, early childhood education fits firmly into this bracket. While taking out a simple constantly reducing property backed loan can be viewed as "set and forget" with little more than a decision to fix or float every few years, your business will inevitably change over time and perhaps even month to month, and you need a banking partner that can meet your business' changing needs.

Your banker should display:

- A passion for customer service and genuine interest in your business and industry
- A desire to understand your goals and objectives, not only for your business but for you personally as well.
- A thorough understanding of your industry and an ability to talk the same language as other industry participants.
- Broad business acumen and a comprehensive grasp of finance concepts and banking expertise.
- Accessibility, including multiple points of contact within their team.
- A proactive approach to better banking solutions for your business.
- A demonstrated understanding of the key drivers of your business.
- Specialist advice as well as the best financial products.
- Access to specialists in fields such as merchant services (payments), insurance, Asset and Debtor finance.
- Be able to recommend other financial partners such as an accountant and solicitor.

How do you know that you've chosen the right bank?

Your banker should be able to help you work through and understand all the direct and indirect costs of financing your business, using a balance of your own equity and any bank funding. Whilst finance may be an essential ingredient to making your dream



come true, ask your banker about other essential business services such as merchant facilities, internet and telephone banking, business insurance and financial planning advice as well. You want your banker to work closely with you to give you financial, business and personal wealth advice, not just assistance with loans.

The bank you've chosen should offer you a product suite that will meet both the short- and long-term needs of your business, can meet any plant or machinery needs you might have and can also deliver you other add on benefits such as ongoing business education programmes.

You should feel like you and your bank are partners, with each playing a vital part in your business success.

What's not unreasonable for your potential bank to expect of you.

Expect your banker to ask you questions, much like you wouldn't recall every detail about every child, it is impossible to be familiar with all details of all clients regardless of how long they have been a customer.

You want your banker to work closely with you to give you financial, business and personal wealth advice - not just assistance with loans. Be prepared with as much information as possible to answer your banker's questions. The more expensive the business, the more in-depth the level of information required should be.

The most effective bankers will want to develop long-term relationships with their clients and have the ability to ask them the right questions to make them think about the way they operate their business. They will take the time to understand client needs and aspirations, and then apply their knowledge and understanding of business to develop the right solutions for them.

Your bank will likely ask you for...

- **A loan application form.** The information required will vary from lender-to-lender, but will generally cover basic personal and business information, including:
- **A statement of position** - in simple terms this is what you own and what you owe. This is required to gain an understanding of your financial position. A prudent lender does not want clients over committed, and will want to understand what you are prepared to put on the line, and what personal financial strength is being brought to the table.
- **Personal information** - this allows a full credit check to be done with your permission, and will incorporate you providing copies of photographic identification. If you are new to a bank, there may be additional requirements such as current bank statements.
- **Business information** - including your company name, physical address, incorporation number, director's and shareholder's structure and IRD number. This will also allow a check of any security interests that may be registered against your company.

- **Financial accounts** - in the case of purchasing an existing business, there is an expectation of seeing the past two year's accounts, along with a cash flow projection suited to your own personal position. It is recommended that an independent party be involved in the preparation of cash flows, preferably an experienced accountant.

In either situation, it is important that you understand the projections and can explain them. If you as a borrower can't understand the what, how and why of your business, then expect your banker to take a closer look at your suitability as a candidate for borrowing.

- **A brief business plan** - explaining what the business is, how you intend to fund it, who will work in the business and what your expectations of return are. While specialist lenders will often have a good understanding of a number of industries, you should understand and be able to communicate what your business proposition is.
- **A copy of your lease** if applicable.

Remember that you are looking to make a long-term commitment, so all the factors need to be right to ensure you have the best possible chance of success.

This article is intended as a general discussion only. The views expressed are his own and do not necessarily represent those of BNZ or its related entities. For more information please call 0800 269 763 or email Warren on Warren_sare@bnz.co.nz.,



By Jamie Lainson

Marketing your early childhood education brand or centre with *social media*

There are three types of people when it comes to social media - those that don't know a thing about it, those that use it on occasion, and those that practically live in it. There is no correct level of engagement in social media for personal use as it comes down to personal preference; but whichever of these three categories you fall into, you should know that social media marketing is extremely important for your early childhood education (ECE) brand or centre in building your brand image to secure enrolments.

What is social media marketing?

First of all, let's define what social media is. Social media is a broad term, and really covers any website, app, or other online-based system that is designed for people to interact with each other and connect over the internet. Common examples of social media platforms that you may use yourself include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

There are two main types of user when it comes to social media. Many people use social media for personal reasons, including keeping in touch with friends and family, or connecting with new people. Others use social media for business and commercial reasons in order to expand their customer or client base, retain existing customers, or build a stronger brand identity.

The use of social media by businesses or organisations for advertising purposes is called social media marketing, and when implemented correctly, is an invaluable tool for building a brand image and finding new customers.

Why use social media for marketing?

The internet allows us to communicate with others from all over the globe within a matter of seconds, and social media makes this process simple. There are a huge number of reasons why social media is a great way to market your ECE brand or centre, and it's hard to find a reason not to. Here are some of the benefits of social media marketing.

Huge audience

According to Statista, Facebook had 1.49 billion monthly active users in the second quarter of 2015. As at June 30th 2015, Twitter had 316 million monthly active users, with half a billion tweets every single day according to their company statistics. Within five years of its launch, the number of users on Instagram exceeded 400 million, as stated in their blog. Clearly, social media usage isn't exactly limited to a handful of users; hundreds of millions of people all over the world use social media regularly. With an audience of this size, you can be sure that all types of people are using social media, including parents looking for an ECE centre to enrol their child in. Some social media platforms even allow you to target your advertising to specific demographics to ensure the most effective reach.

The Human Element

Using social media, it is possible to communicate with your audience at a more personal level as well as on a broader, more general scale. If a prospective parent

responds positively to a post or photo, or asks a question, you have an opportunity to reply back as a one-on-one interaction.

People love dealing with other people rather than seemingly cold, distant corporations, and this "human element" to social media marketing is one way in which your target audience can really get to trust and connect with your ECE brand or centre.

Measurable results

With most social media platforms, it is very easy to track the success of your marketing campaigns with objective statistics. You are able to clearly identify whether or not certain interactions (such as posts or photos) receive a positive response, and can use these results to modify and refine your social media marketing strategy. Many social media platforms do this by tracking the number of likes, comments, shares, and favourites on each of your posts, and some provide more comprehensive statistics relating to views and audience reach.

Builds a strong brand image

A strong brand image is critically important in the success of any business, and early childhood education is certainly no exception. Parents need to feel they can trust you before sending their children to your centre, and a strong brand image will help parents feel more comfortable in your legitimacy and trustworthiness. Social media allows you to communicate your message for your ECE brand or centre to a wide audience on a regular basis. This builds up the strength of

your brand image over time by continuously exposing your target market to your brand or centre, which in turn builds credibility as social media users subconsciously learn to associate your name and brand image with childcare.

Affordable

One particularly attractive aspect to social media marketing is its affordability. No matter the size of your budget, you are able to advertise to some degree on social media. In most instances, it costs nothing to create an account on a social media platform and start building your social media presence. Some platforms have highly scalable paid advertising systems to further increase your reach and target particular demographics.

How do you use social media for marketing?

Firstly, don't be intimidated at the thought of using a social media platform that you aren't very familiar with. Social media platforms are designed to be user-friendly, and are intended to make your life easier rather than more difficult! Here are a few tips for getting started with social media marketing.

Identify a specific platform

If you haven't already, identify a specific social media platform to build your presence on. Rather than signing up for every single platform you can think of (the "shotgun approach"), focus your efforts on one or two. You will find it much easier to manage and maintain a smaller number of social media profiles/pages, and the ones that you do end up choosing will benefit from the more concentrated attention by keeping your best content in one place. When choosing a social media platform, think about today's parents and their interests and lifestyle to select the most appropriate platform.

Learn from your competitors

Who are the early childhood education giants? How are they using social media, and what platforms are they using? As with any form of marketing, you can learn a lot from what your competitors are doing, and learn from their mistakes so that you don't have to make them yourself. Do some research to find out how social media is being used in the ECE community, and identify what works and what doesn't before you get started to ensure a successful beginning to your social media campaign.

Create content regularly

When a parent views your social media profile, they will be looking for activity. If your page or profile is neglected or empty, they may simply turn around and go back. Creating content regularly is one of the most important elements to a successful social media marketing campaign, especially for boosting credibility and recognition. Many of the most well-known brands in the world have very active social media profiles, meaning that they are interacting regularly with potential customers to keep their brand in the front of their minds.

In Summary

Social media is an extremely powerful tool for marketing your ECE brand or centre as it can greatly increase your online presence, resulting in a much stronger brand image. Ultimately, this can lead to an increase in trust from parents as they recognise your name as a legitimate, professional, and trustworthy ECE provider, encouraging them to enrol their children in your centre.

Sources

Facebook stats - (<http://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>)

Twitter stats - (<https://about.twitter.com/company>)

Instagram stats - (<http://blog.instagram.com/post/129662501137/150922-400million>)

About the author

Jamie Lainson is a web designer/developer and company co-director at Zesty Design Limited. You can contact him on either 021 068 0292 or jamie@zestydesign.co.nz, or visit Zesty's website at www.zestydesign.co.nz



It's time for early childhood centres and services to grow and support those in leadership roles by...

'Investing In Leadership Capital'



InterLEAD's 2016 Leadership Programme A Two Part Residential Course for Early Childhood Leaders

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS PROGRAMME?

This is an opportunity for centre managers, head teachers, team leaders, owner/operators and middle management leaders who have leadership responsibility in their centre or service. Whether you are leading teachers, leading the curriculum or leading the organisation, this sought after programme is for you.

This programme will be held at Pudding Hill Lodge in Canterbury during March and November 2016. It includes two three-day residential workshops - plus follow up visits in-between the residential workshops in your centre.

\$1950 +GST Per Person. (Course fee includes full accommodation, meals, course manuals plus transfer costs from Christchurch Airport to Pudding Hill).

For full details and course dates or to register your interest simply email Emma at office@interlead.co.nz or enrol online at www.interlead.co.nz > programmes

Bang for your buck ...

Companies are always looking for ways to save money without having to cut corners and compromise on quality. A good way to save money is to control expenses by investing in hardware and software products that you actually use. Such investments will pay higher dividends over a longer period. Below are some tips on different technologies that can save you money in the short and long term.

1. Use the cloud

The cloud is fantastic. It allows businesses to inexpensively get the resources and storage they need and adjust that usage on the run. The cloud allows you to avoid the expense of quite a bit of hardware and gives you FREE access to software that you might otherwise need to purchase and maintain yourself.

2. Use the Internet for calls and meetings

Services like Skype is a great way to keep in touch. This requires only an Internet connection, so you can save money by not investing in a phone system. You can have "face-to-face" meetings using video conferencing which saves on time and the cost of travelling.

3. Use search engine marketing

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is the easiest and most affordable marketing tool available

for a small business. SEMs make specific targeting possible. You can gain better access to the people who are trying to find your type of services. Compared to traditional marketing, which both require huge upfront investments, SEM is inexpensive and provides a return on investment almost immediately. As people use the Internet more frequently to find what they're looking for, your online marketing efforts can get you top ratings via social media as well as lead to more organic growth.

4. Experiment with telecommuting

Telecommuting may not be suit all businesses but it can be a huge money saver. You avoid providing office space for employees as they use their own home offices. Telecommuting allows you and your workers to focus on productivity rather than worry about overheads. Experiment with telecommuting even if it works for only part of your staff.

5. Go paperless

Go green by reducing your paper usage. Go digital with all your forms, templates and records. You can save on the cost of paper, ink cartridges and printer maintenance. Digital records offer a number of benefits, including making it easier to find important documents when you need them. You can securely store

your records in the cloud at a fraction of the cost and access them online from anywhere. No more warehousing costs for your paper records. Even part digitisation of records can save you quite a bit in the long run.

6. Buy laptops instead of desktops

This is a roundabout way to save money, but laptops use about 90 percent less energy than a comparable desktop, and they offer mobility (good for telecommuting!) without sacrificing much in the way of usability. A laptop may not be a good option for power-hungry computational needs, such as graphic design, but it can work well for many other roles and that can save a lot of money on your energy bills.

7. Buy powerful computers and upgrade their memory instead of replacing them

When purchasing computers for your business, go overboard. Sure, computers age quickly, but, buying extra powerful computers with a lot of memory increases the machine's usable life and decreases your costs in the long run because you don't have to replace them as often. If memory requirements increase, look into improving their memory instead of replacing the entire machine.



About the author

Firoz Wadhwanja, Technical Director at Mace IT Services is passionate about innovative and cost-effective IT solutions and services. You can find more about what they offer at the website: <http://www.maceit.co.nz/>



Summer's on the horizon – is your family water-safe?

DrownBase already reporting more deaths than last year

Water is an essential part of New Zealand's identity and many Kiwi kids grow up spending their holidays at the beach, fishing off the rocks, swimming in a pool or learning how to drive a boat.

According to Safekids Aotearoa, drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death among children between 1 and 4 years old and the third leading cause of injury-related death among children 19 and under. YMCA Auckland believes that water safety should be an important aspect of all children's education, and that it can never start too early. Children under the age of 16 can also swim for free at any pool facility managed by YMCA Auckland, thanks to Auckland Council.

Karla McCaughan, YMCA Swim School Quality Services Manager for YMCA Auckland, recently awarded AUSTSWIM Teacher of Infant and Preschool Aquatics, says, "Teaching children to swim is a cause very close to my heart. The vast majority of kids under five that drown do so because they don't have basic water safety skills. Having those skills makes all the difference, I truly believe that."

Sadly, DrownBase, the national database that tracks all mortality and morbidity drownings within New Zealand, is already reporting more deaths from drowning this year than last, and with summer fast approaching, it's a hugely important time for children, families and caregivers to learn about safety in the water.

Early swimming has a whole raft of benefits besides water confidence and reducing the odds of drowning. Teaching children to swim early is vital to their physical, social and personal growth and swimming promotes sensory exploration, develops muscle strength, and encourages bonding between children and parents.

Babies are able to use many more muscles in the water than they can on land, so swimming allows them to increase their physical development as well. It also helps build their verbal skills to such an extent that they're usually better prepared for school than their non-swimming peers.

YMCA Auckland provides swimming workshops, lessons and programmes for school groups and the sessions are tailored to suit all ages, abilities, group requirements and sizes. The children are split up into groups led by qualified instructors

Assistant Swim School Coordinator, Pam Woller, of Glen Innes Pool and Leisure Centre managed by YMCA, says these kinds of workshops are a great overview of elements from the different water safety programmes the centres teach.

"It's all about getting kids to feel more confident in and around the water; giving them the education to simply be aware of the dangers of swimming as well as some skills on safe water play," says Pam.

YMCA Auckland aquatic facilities offer free introductory "Aquatic Play" sessions for parents and children, aimed at developing confidence in the water before young children begin swimming lessons. Aquatic Play sessions are fun and educational for parents and children and focus on activities that encourage water safety, including learning to be comfortable floating on their back, an essential life-saving skill.

Get in touch with your local YMCA to see what they are doing to help schools, children and families be more confident in the water this summer, or visit www.ymcauckland.org.nz/swim for more information.



About YMCA Auckland

Established in 1855, YMCA Auckland is not-for profit and is one of the most enduring organisations in New Zealand. Its vision is to build strong kids, families and communities through fitness, swimming, recreation, childcare, accommodation, sport, youth programmes and camps across Auckland.

YMCA Auckland and AUSTSWIM

YMCA Auckland recently made a big splash at AUSTSWIM Aotearoa Awards (an internationally recognised teaching qualification for safe aquatic education). The four main categories at the AUSTSWIM Aotearoa Awards are AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety; AUSTSWIM Teacher of Infant and Preschool Aquatics; AUSTSWIM Teacher of Access and Inclusion; and AUSTSWIM Teacher of Adults. Proudly, two YMCA Auckland swimming instructors won one of these awards each.

YMCA Auckland offer swimming lessons from babies to adults, of all ages and abilities, and classes have a huge focus on water safety, and facilitators work closely with Water Safety New Zealand and other industry professionals to continually update and improve their techniques.



Resource Reviews



Stripes! No, Spots!

Vasanti Unka

Puffin NZ

Tiger claims that stripes are best. Leopard insists that spots are tops. Their squabble turns into a quarrel; the quarrel becomes a battle; and, by lunchtime, the jungle is a complete mess.

Monkey calls a meeting of the Jungle Council and all the animals put their heads together

to come up with a plan. Their cunningly stylish way of resolving matters will bring out the best in everyone . . . well, almost everyone.

A gorgeously colourful, fabulously fashion-conscious and shrewdly funny new picture book from the award-winning author of *The Boring Book*. *Stripes! No, Spots!* will delight and entertain children ages from three years up.



Whose Beak is This?

By Gillian Candler

Illustrated by Fraser Williamson

Potter & Burton

Whose Beak is This? gives children an opportunity to learn more about New Zealand birds through guessing the identity of a bird from an illustration of their beaks, while at the same time learning about each bird along the way and discovering how diverse bird species are.

Inferred within the text is the science concept of adaption due to the explanation on how different birds need different shaped beaks due to the kind of food they eat.

This book has been designed and written for 3-6 year olds and will be a useful resource for projects, encouraging observation skills, exploring your local environment and bird spotting and of course for any young ornithologist, and will make a great addition to all New Zealand early childhood centres.



Hairy Maclary and Friends Cuddle and Play: A crinkly cloth book

By Dame Lynley Dodd

Mallinson Rendel

This gorgeously soft cloth book features rascally Hairy Maclary and his rollicking

gang, as well as Slinky Malinki, the cheeky and cheerful black cat, and pittery, pattery Zachary Quack.

Safe for all ages, *Hairy Maclary and Friends: Cuddle and Play* is the perfect item to delight and entertain a baby. There are rhymes to read together, crinkly pages to shake and scrunch and, at nap time, babies can snuggle up to their best-loved characters.



Let's Catch that Rainbow!

By Ann Keane

Pines Estate Books

One rainy afternoon, Hadleigh spies a rainbow. He heads off outside to see if he can catch it. Unable to catch it, he asks his mum to come and help. More and more people

help. Then Dad comes up with an idea. Will the rainbow be caught?

This story is set in rural New Zealand, with classic beautiful illustrations to match the rural life Hadleigh and his family live in. Despite being set in rural New Zealand, any child with a liking for rainbows and absurdity will enjoy this amusing and sweet tale.



I Want Spaghetti!

By Stephanie Blake

Gecko Press

From Stephanie Blake, author of best-selling book, *Poo Bum*, we have this fun and colourful children's book *I Want Spaghetti!*

If you want an anatomically correct drawing of a rabbit or for your child to learn about

the dietary and physical needs of a rabbit then this book isn't for you. If what you are looking for is a fun, brightly coloured book, with a charming and humorous story that teaches children the value of doing what is right, through to a story that is great for both a bedtime story and for your child as they learn to read themselves, then this is it. And a perfect book to read to fussy eaters!

Reviewed by Fern Anderson



Sir Scallywag and the Battle of Stinky Bottom

By Giles Andreae

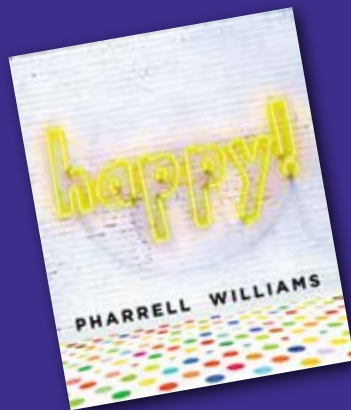
Illustrated by Korky Paul

Puffin

'Sir Scallywag! Retrieve the golden Sausage, which will make me love forever. It will match my underpants as well. How's that, old bean, for clever?'

When King Colin sets his sights on finding the famous Golden Sausage, there's only one person for the job: Sir Scallywag! But will the six-year-old knight be mighty enough to defeat the filthy trolls that guard the Golden Sausage and win the Stinkiest Battle Ever?

Sir Scallywag is as hilarious as ever, and this will have children and those reading this rude story roaring with laughter!



Happy

By Pharrell Williams

Puffin

Grammy Award winner Pharrell Williams brings his hit song to the youngest of readers in a delightful blend of illustrations and photos of children celebrating what it means to be happy. The joy in these pages is hard not to miss, as kids of all stripes

have fun doing everything from riding a hot air balloon into outer space to dancing on clouds, laughing with emojis and rocking out as a band. A picture book for all ages, *Happy!* is the very best of childhood imagination and play. It will quickly become a treasured keepsake – a classic in the making of the happiest order. Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth. Warning – hard to read without breaking out in song!



In the Bush Explore & Discover New Zealand's Native Forests

By Gillian Candler

Illustrated by Ned Barraud

Potter & Burton

In the Bush is the latest title from the award-winning explore & discover series, which includes the books, *At the Beach*, *In the Garden* & *Under the Ocean*. *In the Bush* explores and shares information about animals, insects and plants that can be found in our New Zealand bush, and possibly even in your early childhood centre's backyard.

Throughout the book young listeners will learn and discover intriguing facts about familiar creatures as well as less known plants and animals from insects and other invertebrates, fungi, ferns and mosses, birds, bats, introduced pests, vines, epiphytes, and trees and discover how they all relate to each other in the forest ecosystem. Also discussed are pests and other dangers to our native wildlife.

This book again will be a great asset to any early childhood centre and a good reason to explore your own local habitat and encourage scientific explorers.

Reviewed by Fern Anderson

It's a book many children will love and who many will return to for repeat reading, encouraging vocabulary extension, storytelling skills and thoughts about the wider world we live in and how we all interact. A book for all preschoolers, at all levels.

Don't stand under a Fu Fu Tree and *If I had a Dragon* have been written for younger preschoolers in mind, while *Duck Feet* and *Never Tug a Tiger's Tail* have been written for 4 and 5 year olds, with some of the poems a bit longer and a slightly more enriched vocabulary. All four books come with a CD for children to read with. Books to be shared one-on-one and in groups and perfect additions for your library.



Book

By David Miles

Illustrated by Natalie Hoopes

Familias

The children's book *Book* may start off plain and simple, the generic black on white, which books are known for. Although as the book progresses the illustrations grow to become a blend of the beautiful and the bizarre. Reading *Book* as someone older than the intended audience gives a sense of nostalgia,

bringing back memories of myself as a child lost in the endless possibilities of a book. This story perfectly describes the feelings you have as you first fall in love with a book and this book itself is lovable. Children will find themselves coming back to look at the pictures, and will ask it to be read to them again and again until they are able to read it themselves. *Book*, has the potential to wind in children and kick start their love for literature, and leaving them eager to learn.

Reviewed by Fern Anderson



The Adventures of Hutu and Kawa

Avis Acres

Picture Puffin

In an old Pohutukawa tree between the forest and the sea live two tiny Pohutukawa Babies, Hutu and Kawa. With the help of Grandpa Kiwi, Hutu and Kawa build a canoe and set off up the river to explore the forest. On their way they make many new friends – and encounter the fearsome Bush Hawk.

During the 1950s children enjoyed the adventures of the Pohutukawa Babies in the New Zealand Herald each week, and Avis Acres' books, with beautiful watercolour illustrations showcasing native flora and wildlife, became best-sellers.

The Adventures of Hutu and Kawa is the first tale in the classic series. This 60th-anniversary hardback edition captures all the charm of the original tale and brings these delightful characters to a new generation of children.



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 recent hit song has been captured in a picture 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 22 January and be in to win.

Competition Winners

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

Sue Fahey, Auckland Point Kindergarten, Nelson
Donna Macefield, Little Peppertree, Rangiora
Glenda de Vries, Frankton Christian Kindergarten, Hamilton



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Childcare Centre - Hawkes Bay Rural Ref. 19129
Business plus Land & Buildings. Licensed for over 30 children, this centre is at the heart of a strong rural community. Enjoying very good occupancy, the purpose-built premises offer a great environment for rural children. With excellent, stable staff in place this would be ideally suited to an owner/operator wanting a centre that has demonstrated its ability to provide a quality early learning environment. **SOLD** \$810,000 plus GST (if any)

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



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Last Laugh

A guy was down on Fisherman's Wharf when he saw a seafood restaurant and a sign on the Specials Board which read, "Big Lobster Tales, \$5 each."

Amazed at the great value, he asked the waitress, "\$5 each for lobster tails... is that correct?"

"Yes," she answered, "It's our special just for today."

"Well," he scoffed, "they must be little lobster tails."

"No," she replied, "It's the really big lobster."

"Are you sure they aren't green lobster tails -- and a little bit tough?"

"No," she said, "it's the really big red lobster."

"Big red lobster tails, \$5 each?" he said, amazed. "They must be old lobster tails!"

"No, they're definitely today's," she told the man.

"Today's big red lobster tails -- for \$5 each?" he repeated, astounded.

"Yes," she insisted.

"Well, here's my five dollars," he finally decided, "I'll take one."

She took the money and led him to a table where she invited him to sit down. She then sat down next to him, put her hand on his shoulder, leaned over close to him and narrated, "Once upon a time there was a..... really big red lobster ..."



Q: What did the baby light bulb say to his mummy?

A: "I wuv you watts and watts."

Q: Why was the broom late for work?

A: Because he over-swept.

Q: What happened when the wheel was invented?

A: It caused a revolution.

Q: What do you call a sleepwalking nun?

A: A roamin' Catholic.

"The best part of being over 40 is that we did most of our stupid stuff before the internet."

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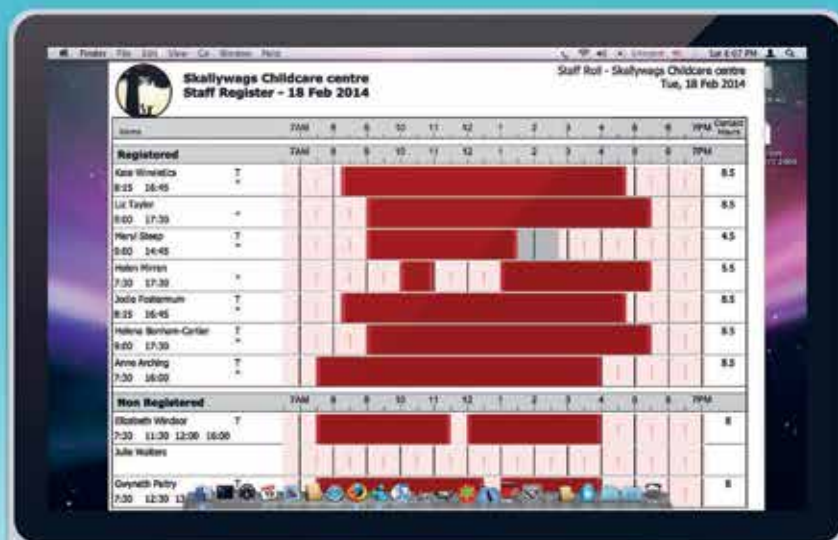
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