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E tipu e rea growing our future
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WAITAKERE
ECE Waitakere network newsletter **Winter 2011**

kia ora

Tena koutou katoa
Na mihi mahana ki a koutou katoa
Warm greetings to all of our readers

This edition of ECE Waitakere newsletter is packed full of information and resources that will support you in your mahi with ngā tamariki and their whānau. The early childhood sector is literally one of growth and change; we expect to see this in tamariki (and ourselves) as time progresses. The early years are an important time for brain development, as Norma Haywood reminded us recently at a free seminar for educators hosted by Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA. Between birth and three years of age 80% of the later adult brain develops, and the experiences a child has during this time will impact hugely on their development.

The early childhood sector is also politically aware, and has had a role in influencing government policy in the past. It was with this in mind that the Children's Commissioner, Dr John Angus, and Dr Janis Lind were invited to share the findings of their research: Through their lens; An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers. This was also a free event hosted by Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA. The researchers explained that the highest growth in enrolments in the early years is seen by the under two year olds. The research found that small group size and low ratios for these children will raise the possibility of quality experiences for them. Another indicator of quality is positive, sensitive and responsive relationships occurring between teachers and children. They have shared their findings with relevant Ministers of the Crown and also the ECE Taskforce. The full report can be found at www.occ.org.nz/publications

Many parents and teachers will be interested to find out more about the recommendations arising from the Final Report of the ECE Taskforce; An agenda for amazing children. The Report has been created to provide advice to the government on policy changes in the early childhood sector. While there are a number of positives there are also areas of concern for many. In particular, their suggestion that the government consider targeted rather than universal funding could see the end of 20 Hours as we know it. Also the suggested that we move to a performance measurement focus has the possibility of narrowing our curriculum; we all know that standardised outcomes will not fit the diverse range of services found in Aotearoa. However, there is a strong theme of increasing quality experiences in early childhood education running through the report. In fact the Report does address many of the concerns that the sector has been expressing of late. I encourage you to read it (it can be accessed on http://www.taskforce.ece) and make up your own minds. Consultation on the document will be open until the 8th August.

Most of you will be aware that there have been funding cuts to professional development funding for many centres that have staff undergoing teacher registration. I encourage you to keep yourself informed of seminars and workshops hosted by various groups in the area. Often these are low cost, or have a koha attached. Flyers, certificates of attendance and your own notes can be kept in professional portfolios as evidence for teacher registration requirements. These documents are also useful for your workplace appraisal processes. The knowledge, information and networking to be gained from attending these events are valuable for all teachers.

On a personal note, this week is my last as a lecturer at Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa. I have accepted the position of head teacher in a kindergarten in Kaitaia, starting there on the 1st of August. Obviously Kaitaia is some distance from my home in Auckland, so we are packing up, taking the cat and heading for the winterless North. After eighteen or so years in the early childhood field in West Auckland it will be hard to say goodbye to my friends and family that I am leaving behind. I wish everyone good health, peace and joy as you work with our precious tamariki – remember they are not the future – they are the now. How we treat our children indicates the depth of care we have towards our world.

Ma te makuku o te pu, ka ora tonu te rakau
In watering the roots, the tree continues to thrive.
Gayleen Taylor

ECE network

ECE Waitakere have an informal network meeting each month. The Waitakere Early Childhood Education (ECE) Call to Action is a network of agencies and people passionate about the importance of the early childhood years as a critical foundation for future development. The ECE Call to Action arose out of a community Summit convened by the former Waitakere City Council in 2002. Several priority areas were identified for Calls to Action including Early Childhood Education (ECE) with the objective 'Every child has access to a quality early childhood education'. ECE-Express and ECE Waitakere is now part Auckland Council's Wellbeing Project. For more information email: Louise.Lennane@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

events

The Big Push

Our children are our most important investment. Don't let the government cut their future!.Bring your children, friends, and buggies and join the BIG PUSH up Queen St to show your support for quality early childhood education.

When: Saturday 9 July, 11am
Where: Meet at Queen Elizabeth Square at 10.30am. March up Queen St, finishing with a rally, sausage sizzle and kids entertainment at Aotea Square at 11.30am
Cost: open to everyone involved in ECE sector: parents, educationalists, teachers, whanau, managers etc
Information: www.nzei.org.nz

Open Playgroup day in Manuwera

If you are heading south, help celebrate with South Auckland's Playgroups. Playgroup provides unstructured play in a safe friendly environment and is an excellent forum for meeting others in your community.
Teuila Consultancy has established six Supported Playgroups in Manukau:

- Homai Playgroup based at Homai Primary School
- Panda-Kiwi Playgroup based at St David's Anglican Church
- Shooting Stars Playgroup at St Luke's Anglican Church
- Little Cookie Monsters at Clendon Community House
- Rimu Playgroup based at SDA Church
- Auga o Aute, Massey Road, Mangere

To celebrate their 1st Anniversary celebration they are holding an Open Playgroup Day at South Mall, Manurewa.
When: Thursday, 14 July 2011, 10am to 12noon
Where: South Mall, Manurewa
Cost: none, with free sausage sizzle - bring the family
Information: Contact Teuila Consultancy on 09 360 0257, 021 2933085 or admin@teuila.co.nz.

NZCA conference

The 48th Annual NZCA Early Childhood Conference & AGM is on 22th-24th July at the Energy Events Centre in Rotorua. The theme for 2011 is "Teachers & learners - Exploring the spaces in-between - Ma te hono a hinengaro e rite ai nga whainga." Registrations are open now. For more info:
http://www.nzca.ac.nz/events/conference

travel fellowship

Margaret M Blackwell Travel Fellowship 2011

Applications for the 2011 fellowship are currently open and will close on 30 September. Applications must be related to the topic of children and physical risk. Details and the application forms are included below.

The fellowship was initiated in 1988 and is now administered by NZCER on behalf of the trust. The award is for a period of up to three months but not less than six weeks. The award is for $16,000 in 2011 and is for travel and accommodation. Travel must be undertaken by July 2012. The Ministry of Education has recognised the fellowship as a prestigious award, which means the recipient may be eligible for leave with pay, subject to the approval of their employing authority.

Who is eligible? It is open to current practitioners in the broad field of early childhood education in New Zealand. The successful recipient will be selected from:
a) Teachers, supervisors and workers from all sectors of early childhood education
b) Lecturers in appropriate disciplines in tertiary institutions.
For inquiries please contact Diana Todd on 04-8021434 or email diana.todd@nzcer.org.nz

Topic for 2011: New Zealand has recently become a 'risk adverse' culture in our playgrounds, environments, activities and early childhood programmes. Increasingly, children are being exposed to less physical activity in their daily environments; health and safety regulations are tighter around equipment and activities that can be provided in educational contexts; and 'free time' to move and attempt 'responsible risk' activities have been stopped altogether in some settings, or are very limited in others. This is both an educational and health issue for early childhood education.

There are increased health reports in New Zealand discussing how very young children are sustaining injuries in everyday activities, through lack of muscle strength and skill in understanding and using their bodies. Academics and practitioners across the globe have argued that children need to learn to use their bodies, take risks to learn the limits of their bodies and the physical sciences of bodies in space. In Japan, and several Nordic countries (Norway, Denmark, Sweden) the concepts of 'risk' are very different from the North American model that New Zealand appears to be following – children are encouraged to explore and take the 'small risks' that protect the children from later 'big risks' as teenagers. The trustees believe this topic is a timely one to explore, to provide support for understanding of how we can be redesigning our environments, our pedagogy and our regulations for ECE.

research

ECE taskforce The independent Early Childhood Education (ECE) Taskforce, established by Education Minister Anne Tolley in October last year, released its report An Agenda for Amazing Children on 1 June 2011. The report outlines the ECE Taskforce's recommendations to Government on the future direction of ECE in New Zealand. The recommendations cover aspects such as: continued investment in ECE ensuring ECE services are high quality because investment in low-quality is poor value prioritising funding for groups of children with low rates of ECE participation improved performance and accountability arrangements, including much clearer reporting to parents, and Building a strong evidence base to guide future investment.

There is an eight week public consultation period on the recommendations made in the ECE Taskforce report. The consultation began on 15 June 2011 and will end on 8 August 2011. Parents, whanau, employers and the ECE sector are being encouraged to take part in the consultation process so that Government can consider public feedback before working through the recommendations. For

For more information go to: http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/LeadHome/ManagementInformation/RecentAnnouncements/ConsultationECETaskforce.aspx
or e-mail: ECE.TaskforceConsultation@minedu.govt.nz

Family Resilience: **The settlement experience for Asian immigrant families in New Zealand**

2010. Dixon, R.S., Tse, S., Sobrun-Mahataj, A., & Rossen, F.

Relatively little research has adopted a qualitative approach in order to understand how individuals, much less families, experience the immigration process.

Using a resilience-focused approach, the present study explores how migrant and refugee families from four Asian ethnic groups experienced immigration, and the barriers to and facilitators of a positive settlement experience, employing qualitative methods; focus group discussions and family interviews.

Analysis of the focus-group discussions and family interviews highlighted the influence of discrimination, social support, language and communication, and employment and education on the settlement experience. While all the families faced similar challenges, irrespective of ethnic group, the degree of impact these factors had on the settlement experience differed.

http://www.familiescommission.govt.nz/research/culture-and-community/family-resilience

UK research - Letting Children Be Children:

the Report of an Independent Review of the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood was published on 6 June. It is calling for more protection for children from what it calls the sexualised wallpaper that surrounds them. Reg Bailey, Chief Executive of the Mothers' Union, has carried out an independent review looking at the pressures on children to grow up too quickly. The UK Government asked Reg to look into this issue because of the concerns of many parents who feel their children are under increasing pressure to become consumers, and that the world they live in is a more sexualised place than when their parents were growing up.

The recommendations include:

- putting age restrictions on music videos to prevent children buying sexually explicit videos, and to guide broadcasters over when to show them
- covering up sexualised images on the front pages of magazines and newspapers so they are not in easy sight of children
- making every customer make a decision at the point of purchase over whether they want adult content on their home internet, laptops or smart phones, rather than receiving it automatically
- retailers to offer more age-appropriate clothes for children and sign up to a code of practice which checks and challenges the design, buying, display and marketing of clothes, products and services for children
- restricting outdoor adverts containing sexualised imagery where large numbers of children are likely to see them, for example near schools, nurseries and playgrounds
- giving greater weight to the views of parents above the general public in regulating pre-watershed TV
- providing parents with one single website to make it easier to complain about any programme, advert, product or service
- banning the employment of children under 16 as brand ambassadors and in peer-to-peer marketing, and improving parents' awareness of advertising and marketing techniques aimed at children.

To see the full report: https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208078

Online survey on male carers for Waitakere ECE Centres

Has your voice been heard, as we mprove the quality of relationships that Early Childhood Education Services have with their male carer clients. The aims of Violence Free Waitakere's (VFW) , Unitec's and the Early Childhood Education's research project are:

• To Identify the ways in which Early Childhood Education (ECE) services engage with their male clients (the "male carers") of the children in their services

• To identify the gaps in ECE services which if addressed would improve the quality of engagement that male carers have with their children and with ECE services.

• To implement and evaluate a "father friendly" intervention approach with a small number of ECE services.

If we can improve male carer engagement with ECE services, we can improve their engagement with their own children. We are part way through collection of data from a survey of 124 ECE services in West Auckland and a survey of up to 200 male carers using five different ECE services in West Auckland (a Kindergarten, a Pacific language nest, a Playcentre, a Kohanga Reo and an Early Childhood Learning Centre).

These surveys explore such issues as the difficulties of engaging with male carers, what makes male carers comfortable in ECE environments, the ways in which male carers want to contribute, the conversations and general communications that staff have with male carers and what ECE services are doing to encourage male carers to spend more time at the services or to be otherwise more involved.

How responsive are Early Childhood Education Centres to the needs of male carers? Feedback from the survey so far. The percent of children being dropped off by male carers was between 0% and 45% with five centres being 10% or below. Overall 85% of children come in with women.There are only 3 male staff out of the 112 staff in the 14 centres. One of these is a cook who has a lot of interaction with the children, and another is a head teacher, and the third is also a teacher. 90% of the centres would probably or definitely want to employ men, and would get strong support for this from parents, although a small minority of parents might not be happy about this. Centres, though, believe there is a need for better gender balance.

Centres have between 0 and 46 volunteers, of which up to 10 are men in one centre. In total there are 147 female volunteers and 33 males. Men's volunteer roles are generally male roles (gardener, repair man, committee member, Kaumatua) but some are more interactive with children and men can volunteer for the same roles as women.

"There is a prize draw for some great books for your centre from a pool for all participating members"

Centres felt they encourage men by being inclusive, attentive and encouraging to men. They are actively encouraged to come to parent evenings. It's all about whakawhanaugatanga and including grand-dads as well as dads. However only 16% said it is easier to involve dads than mums, while 46% said it is harder. In a majority of cases men are not part of the initial enrolment. It is harder to get hold of dads or get them to do training. Male carers don't volunteer much, and they are often shy and embarrassed being the only male adult in the Centre. At one level it is about getting men to understand the kaupapa of the centre and their role in it. Some centres have no current involvement with male carers.

Discussions with men are quite wide ranging, but some topics are discussed infrequently such as: how men could be more engaged with the centre, and how the centre could work better for men. Discussions about individual children (their activities and strengths) are frequent. Women get most of the phone calls, particularly when children are sick, and more of the emails and letters than men. Promotional activity focused on men is relatively infrequent, particularly around newsletter articles written by men and surveys of male satisfaction with/interests in ECE activities

While centres have areas they think are attractive to men (e.g. encourage energetic physical play), generally there is little focus on information and events of interest to men. Centres think that men should feel safe, but issues about the way staff dress were raised. Generally centres felt male carers would see them as friendly to very friendly. Many centres said that there were ideas in the survey that they would use to improve their engagement with men.

Violence Free Waitakere and Unitec have some students working with us this month, calling centres we haven't heard from, to increase the quantity of our data. You may get a call from them if you haven't posted a survey or asked to come off our list. There is a prize draw for some great books for your centre from a pool of all the participating members. You can go online to complete the survey now.. your children will thank you for it!

http://www.kwiksurveys.com?s=HMKOGK_9b4fe141

resources

Raising Children:

TV programme soon on DVD

Raising Children in New Zealand brings together the work of some of our leading early childhood welfare organisations: Barnardos, Plunket, Family and Community Services (The Ministry of Social Development) and The Office of the Children's Commissioner, have all contributed. Raising Children screens on TVNZ 7, Wednesday nights at 7.05 pm, and again on Thursdays at 4.05pm. TVNZ 7 is also broadcasting a huge variety of bite-sized stories on a rotational basis every day at 11.55am, 3.55pm and 7.55pm, just before the 8pm hour-long news bulletin. TVNZ 7 is found on Freeview Channel 7 and on Sky Channel 77. You'll' find more at www.tvnz.co.nz/raisingchildren

This is a great resource for parents, please help promote to th efamilies in your community. The programme has over 50 stories to choose from, covering birth to three years. You'll find them within five stages - Newborn, Infant, Crawler, Toddler or Two year old. Then you choose a category - Age and Stage, Breastfeeding or Eating, Sleeping, Mind and Body, Health and Wellbeing and Dealing with Challenges. Back on the Main Menu, take a look at our SKIP stories (Strategies with Kids, Information for Parents), applicable to all ages and stages, which focus on the six key things you need to do so that children grow up to be happy, capable adults. Featuring around 20 New Zealand families and as many experts, the DVD is presented by five well-known parents: 0 Monique Bree, Bernice Mene, Cory Jane, Sonia Gray and Kiel McNaughton. Join them on the journey of parenting little ones from birth to three, the years that last forever.

A DVD will be given free to every new parent on their first visit to their Plunket nurse . Other copies can be pre-ordered at: www.raisingchildren.org.nz/

professional development

Warwick Pudney is running a course around working with boys in August, called 'Teacher Aides working with boys' but it refers to anyone who works with boys in education. Definitely suitable for ECE. He ran a course in May around anger in children, which was mainly attended by ECE and very well-received.

Warwick Pudney has 12 years experience as a teacher of children from 6-16yrs, and 20 years working in the counselling therapy field with couple men and adolescents largely around relationship, anger or behaviour issues. For the last 10 years he has traveled the length of NZ working with educators, caregivers, social services and community professionals in individual, workshop, seminar, and conference settings.

He is currently the National Director of the NZ Violence Prevention Society- a body registering professionals working in this area, and providing advice on violence prevention.

He was the founding C.E.O. of Man Alive, a Men's Counselling and Well-being Centre and N.Z.'s first social service for males which is now pioneering new ways of assisting men, youth and boys to alter behaviour and lifestyles.

He is a senior lecturer in Violence and Trauma Studies at Auckland University of Technology and a free-lance educator and trainer and writes practical self-help books.

His work has an emphasis on children's anger and behaviour, boys in the education system, parenting, violence prevention, emotional literacy and child-adult relationships, fathering, conflict resolution, professional supervision and mentoring, problem-solving in organisations and groups.

When: 9.00am - 3.00pm, 19 August
Where: Learning Network NZ, Cnr Soljan & Universal Drives, Henderson, Auckland.
Cost: $190 (+gst) per person. Savings on the full price above if you are a member centre - take off $40
information: Call 835 0912 or 0800 GO WEST . Email : courses@learningnetwork.ac.nz

Early childhood online community: **http://www.eceonline.core-ed.org/**

New online is a early childhood community that is free to join, in fact no costs as all are involved! It has been created to support the new range of MOE professional learning opportunities as well as provide space to discuss all things ECE with a focus on Infants and Toddlers and Pedagogical Leadership. There are discussion boards, online readings and resources, upcoming series of webinars (online workshops), videos and a whole lot more to come.

Feel free to come and have a look - you don't need to register to look around the site but the free membership entitles you to participate in discussions and get up to date notices on what is happening online. See you there!

news

Auckland Council launches new Home Play initiative

Home Play is the latest initiative of the Waitakere ECE Network Call to Action: "Every child has access to quality ECE and is on a life long learning journey."

HomePlay is being funded and managed by Auckland Council for a one year trial period from July 2011 to June 2012.

In Waitakere, there are large numbers of under five's who are not accessing and engaged in early childhood learning. There are a number of barriers that are understood which are preventing engagement for some of these families. There are also hard to reach groups for whom there are multiple barriers to participation which are not always clear.

Research evidence indicates that these children are facing major educational disadvantage in critical formative years. We know that if children have access to quality early learning opportunities from early childhood they will have a much better start to their educational lives, potential future life choices and overall wellbeing.

The Waitakere Home Play project proposes to facilitate the establishment of street based learning and sharing opportunities initially for families in Massey/West Harbour. Through the provision of a facilitated 'Play Day' once a week in a home in a specified street these families will begin to engage in a group based ECE learning experience. It is anticipated this will benefit the adults and their tamariki/mokopuna engaged in the project by increasing their understanding of early childhood development and learning and strengthening parenting skills.

Home Play will connect families who are unlikely to get involved in formal early childhood education and hopefully provide a stepping stone for these families to become more engaged in further learning opportunities. Home Play will complement existing street based neighbourhood and other community initiatives.

Home Play is being hosted by Violence Free Waitakere and coordinated by Annie Gordon.
For more information on Home Play please contact Annie at: anniegordon@vodafone.co.nz

transition to schools

Transitions to schools project

Louise Taylor from CORE Education, is currently undertaking a transitions to schools project as part of a Ministry of Education funded professional learning contract in the Henderson area. She is working with a group of early education teachers and community workers to find out more about parent perspectives on the transition process. The idea for the project came out of a report written on transitions by Sally Peters from the Waikato University. In this report Peters (2010) suggests that future research needs to include the voices of families, children and teachers and that "the voices of families and children who may potentially be at risk of making less successful transitions are the ones that most need to be heard" (p. 75). While this is not a research project, the intentions is nevertheless to hear the voices in the community that most need to be heard, starting with the stories of parents.

The project got underway at the end of June 2011 with those involved meeting over coffee to put their issues on the table and draft a way forward. At the next meeting in August the group will be planning more specifically how they will involve parents and the method they will use to hear and record parent stories. There is no set completion date for the project at this point, but the first phase will end at the completion of this year. It is hoped that these stories when compiled, will open up dialogue amongst the various stakeholders involved in the transitions process. The next phase of the project may include collecting the stories of children but this is still to be decided.

If you would like to be involved in this project in any way please contact Louise via email: louise.taylor@core-ed.org

what we have been reading

Norma Hayward from the Brainwave Trust has some reading books she has personally read and would like to share:

- **Steve Biddulph** "Raising Babies - Should the Under 3's Go to Nursery"
- **Anne Mann** "Motherhood - How Should We Care for Our Children"
- **Sue Gerhardt** "Love Matters"
- **Margot Sunderland** "The Science of Parenting"
- **Dr Sue Gerhardt** "Love Matters"
- **Bruce Perry** " The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog"
- **Bruce Perry** "Born for Love - Why Empathy is Essential and Endangered"
- **T Berry Brazelton & Stanley I Greenspan** "The Irreducible Needs of Children"