

# Playcentre

Journal



**ISSUE 158**

Summer / Raumati 2018

Strategic plan - The new education programme  
- Bicultural sustainability - Cooking  
- Playcentre in a changing world



## A beginning

Ko Manaia te maunga,  
Ko Hatea te awa,  
No Whangārei ahau.  
Kei Iwikatea tōku kāinga ināianeī.  
Ko Balclutha tōku whānau tupu ngātahi.  
Ko Rebekah ahau.

Whangārei Heads. Kaniere. Balclutha. Three different Playcentres scattered across Aotearoa, all of which have shaped me – and my whānau – in dramatic ways. As a preschooler playing under Manaia, to now, watching my tamawāhine playing alongside the Mata-Au, Playcentre has been there in my tentative years as both a child and a mother.

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Finished with your latest copy of the Playcentre Journal? Spread the word by passing your copy onto a friend or taking it to your local doctor's surgery, kindergarten, school reception, Plunket or music group.

I am honoured to be the kaiwāwāhi matua of the Journal. When my great-grand children arrive at Playcentre, I do not want them to find this copy sitting on a shelf or in a box gathering dust. I hope within these pages there is a piece that inspires you, that challenges you, that guides you. Tear out (or photocopy!) the pages. Use them. The Journal is not an historic record. It is a resource. For you. By you. Thank you for entrusting me with our stories.

**Rebekah Lyell**  
**Playcentre Journal**  
**kaiwāwāhi matua**



If you have an essay, feature story, photographs or research on Playcentre related topics, we would love to read them! For future issues we are looking for submissions on:

- Transitions to school
- Improving meetings
- Schema and working theories
- Tapasā and Te Whatu Pōkeka in action
- A beginner's guide to learning stories
- Place based learning

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**Cover photo:** Balclutha Playcentre, Southern South Island region

# Nurturing nature

**Taradale Playcentre's Nicola Smith has gardening in her blood. Having grown up on a horticulture farm, she could not help but get involved in a revamp of the Centre's garden. The project became one that spanned the generations.**



My attention was first brought to the native garden area by Nic Marett, our awesome Centre President, who asked someone to do a curriculum review on it. I also needed to set up an area of play for my Playcentre Introductory Award. I combined them and observed how tamariki interacted around our native garden which was overgrown with some massive grasses, nīkau, some small flaxes and a spiky phoenix palm. Nic pointed out there was a tap amongst it somewhere that they hadn't used for ages and would be ideal for water play.

It was good getting ideas about the space from lots of members via the curriculum review and consulting the other parents during the meetings. One

idea from one of our members was to make a little table and chair for the tamariki, which we did, using big posts we already had. We also widened the loop path using some pavers we found out the back – the idea was to try to encourage tamariki into the space. The main specifications I gave myself, or was given, was to use what we already had, keep the cost to around \$100, gain access to the tap for the hose, make the amazing mural behind all the plants more visible, use low maintenance plants and keep it all native.

Not knowing a huge lot about native plants, I made a proposal about native shrubs from Mitre 10 Napier. The plant lady was super helpful – which helped me get it down to around seven plant varieties. The internet and plant labels also proved helpful. I wanted some ground cover plants that would survive tamariki walking on them, to cover the dirt to minimise weeds growing and plants that wouldn't get too big. I shared the proposal with centre members and my Mum, who very enthusiastically gave me more plant advice. She even offered to donate some plants from my parent's nursery, which kept the cost down.



Now it is such a joy seeing our children interact in the space, I look forward to seeing the plants grow alongside our babies. I want to thank my Mum Raewyn from Matakana Palms for donating plants, who helped me create the garden and who first introduced me to Playcentre 30 years ago.



# Nā tō rourou, nā taku With your basket and my l

## Cluster 101



**Clusters**  
by centres, for centres

### What is a cluster?

Clusters are the primary forum for centre-voice in Playcentre Aotearoa. Each cluster is made up of between five and 20 Centres. Clusters will primarily focus on centre needs and centre issues and allow centres to discuss common issues—of a local or national nature. Clusters are a space for centres to share where they are on their journey, give and receive help and support, and share information.

Their purpose is to enable engagement with the wider organisation

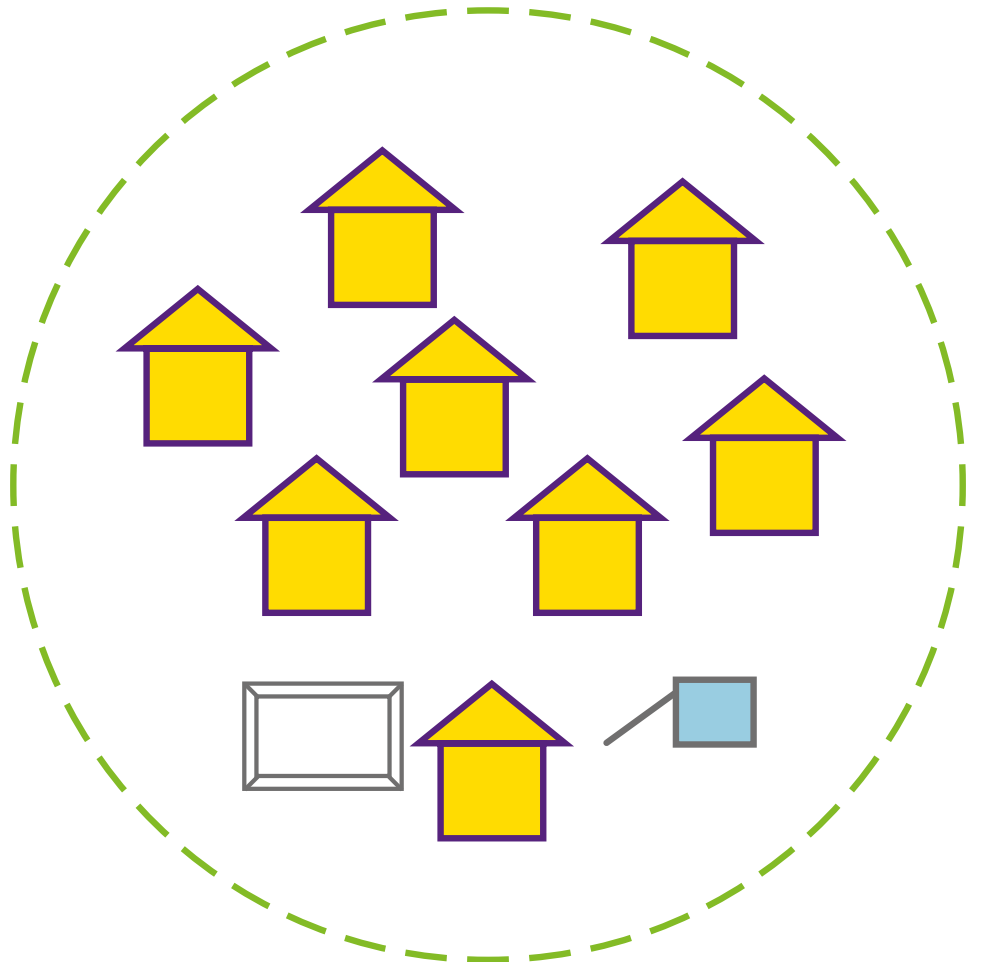
### They:

- are by centres for centres
- are self-determining, self-managing and membership can change
- are a support mechanism, with a bit of governance
- will discuss the budget and levy, strategic plan, annual plan, remits, and selection of trustees to a greater or lesser extent, depending on their capability and desire at the time
- will feed centre views into the Tāngata Tiriti Hui and choose people to attend Tāngata Tiriti Hui
- can be a forum for two-way information sharing with the management structure

### Meetings

It is recommended that clusters meet:

- at least once per term, but you might like to do more.
- in week four of the term, which gives the centre a chance to meet before the Cluster, and to meet after (if your centre has two business meetings per term) to discuss any relevant agenda items.



Meetings can be held at centres or other appropriate venues. It is entirely up to the cluster members and their budgets. If meetings are held at centres, then it could be rotated around centres to share the costs.

### Resources

An agenda template, as well as minutes template, and karakia and waiata, in the Cluster Toolkit – are available on the Knowledgebase through the Playcentre website.

# rourou ka ora ai te iwi basket, the people will live

Northland  
Playcentres

Whangarei

Auckland

Hamilton

Rotorua

## Northland clusters shine

Northland Playcentres are paving the way for cluster meetings with themes, delicious food and a rotating roster leading to high levels of engagement. Keri Squires, centre support co-ordinator, shares some tips and tricks from the region.

Our cluster meetings as usually held in the fourth week of each term. The meetings are held at various centres, who are in charge of hosting the meeting, setting a theme, agenda and nibbles. Our first cluster meeting at the end of 2017 was held at Parklands Playcentre with a theme of 'Mad Hatters' Tea Party'. Since then Horahora Playcentre hosted with an amazing 'grazing table'. Onerahi Playcentre held a 'Pink Ribbon' theme as it was breast cancer awareness month.

*The theme of Pink Ribbon was a great way to bring awareness to a great cause as the majority of us within Playcentre are women. But the importance of themes is to be able to have some fun, have a laugh and start the meeting off feeling more relaxed. The parents were encouraged to wear pink, some even came in their fluffy dressing gowns!*

*The importance of the cluster in general for us is support and the chance to talk to other Centres and see how they run, a lot of the information could come from the centre support worker, but it's not the same as visiting another Centre and having the chance to learn – and laugh – without the kids being there and be reassured that we all have the same feelings or concerns within Playcentre.*

– Onerahi Playcentre

Usually, at a cluster meeting, a Centre will share something that they feel they are doing well and encourage other Centres with the information they can share. Parklands shared a powerpoint presentation of their awesome family play area where they are using all real objects and no plastic equipment.



At the recent Parua Bay meeting, they shared their revamped music area which they had received grant money for. People were inspired by the natural wood shelving unit and the large variety of musical instruments.

Parua Bay held a Royal wedding theme. Its ice breaker was your name grandmother's name and then the name of your first pet and your favourite area of play was where you were from. I was Princess Keri Else smokey dutchess of process cooking!

*By making it fun there was a lot of interest within our Playcentre and we had eight members attend. We made a Facebook message group for those interested in the cluster and as a group shared ideas for themes and an icebreaker. This*

*helped encourage communication, fostered relationships and created a 'buzz' about the event.*

*It was a great way to make the new members aware of what's happening outside our Playcentre, both at other centres and in governance. It was a fabulous opportunity to showcase our centre and have feedback and suggestions from other centres. The whole experience brought our members together and created a sense of belonging and ownership of our Playcentre as a team. Making the theme a fun dress up, and having delicious kai provided by the members helped towards the fact that we had almost all centres represented from our central cluster.*

– Parua Bay Playcentre

# Playcentre in a changing world

Jo is a former Playcentre parent who arrived in New Zealand in 2009. She shares her thoughts on how Playcentre can adapt to today's rapidly changing communities. To read about Jo's own experience as a working mother and immigrant at Playcentre, turn to page 8.

It has long been recognised that the only constant is change and it is now widely thought that the pace of change has never been faster than it is now in the early 21st century. Even in Aotearoa, one of the most isolated nations in the world, the effects of that rapid change are being felt across our communities.

Change and our children's capacity to adapt to change is a recurring theme through the first two strands of Te Whāriki – Mana Atua-Wellbeing and Mana Whenua-Belonging. The curriculum makes the following observation about tamariki:

"Their capacity to cope with unpredictability and change is also increasing, especially when anchored by the emotional support, respect and acceptance of kaiako. They are learning to plan and monitor their own activities."

But whilst we prepare our children for the inevitable change that they will experience in their early years, what

are we doing to prepare ourselves and our Playcentres for the fundamental changes that are sweeping through our communities? How can we ensure that Playcentre remains relevant? How can Playcentre adapt and survive and even thrive in this new emerging world? How can we best respond to and meet the changing expectations and needs of our whānau, families and neighbours?

There are two key trends which I believe will have a significant impact on Playcentre:

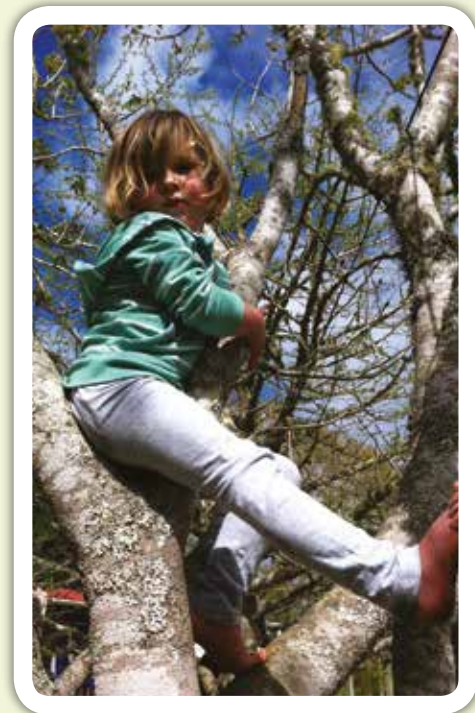
1. The increasing number of mothers returning to work.
2. The high numbers of immigrants moving to New Zealand, creating super-diverse communities.

## Mothers at work

The proportion of women participating in the workforce is rising. By 2016, 64 percent of women of working-age had a job or were looking for one – compared with just 54.7 percent of women in 1986. Now, only 13.9 percent of people not in the workforce attribute it to looking after children, compared to 21.6 percent three decades ago.

There are a number of factors contributing to these changes, including some significant changes in employment law the last 3 years. In 2015, the law changed to make flexible working more widely accessible with the effect that it is now more acceptable and more readily available in many workplaces. Longer periods of paid parental leave also make it easier for mothers to remain in employment after having children.

At the same time, financial pressures from rising costs of living will also mean that more women make the choice – or need to – return to work after giving birth and before their children start school. In 2017, it was reported that New Zealand cities have jumped in the global cost of living rankings and that the average weekly cost of household spending increased by an average of



\$190 per week compared with four years earlier.

This means that more mothers who might otherwise have stayed at home during the early, pre-school years of their children's lives, have now returned to work, either full time or part time. The traditional target audience for Playcentre is shrinking.

## Super-diversity in Aotearoa

There are over 200 ethnicities present in our country's largest cities and 160 languages are being spoken. The inaugural Superdiversity Stocktake revealed that 50 percent of Auckland's population is Māori, Asian and Pasifika peoples, and 44 percent of the city's population were not born in New Zealand. Wellington has many second, third and fourth generation immigrants and 25 percent of the population were born overseas. In the wake of the Canterbury earthquakes, Christchurch has seen an increase in arrivals from Asia, particularly the Philippines.

However, these changes are not being experienced by rural areas and provincial towns. Instead, small towns and rural areas are experiencing slow growth or decline in population due to the rural to urban shift over the last few decades as people follow jobs to our larger cities.

Whilst rural and small town Playcentres will find shrinking rolls due





to shrinking, and ageing, populations, Playcentres in our larger cities will find that there is a smaller proportion of families who are familiar with the concept of Playcentre. More of our neighbours will speak a different first language and live in a different culture to those found most commonly at Playcentre.

### Out of adversity comes opportunity

There can be no doubt that these changes, and many others being experienced by our community, create significant challenge for Playcentre – and may be seen as threatening our very ethos and philosophy. However, our evolving communities also bring many opportunities if we can ensure that our membership is inclusive and reflective of those communities.

A more diverse Playcentre family will bring the precious benefits of diversity of thought, which has been shown to produce more successful organisations. Women who are active in the workforce will bring many useful skills and contacts to Playcentre if they can be persuaded to enrol. Our commitment to biculturalism can be strengthened and enriched as we introduce newcomers to te reo and tikanga Māori.

Even more importantly, there is an opportunity for Playcentre to have a positive impact on our changing population and to step up and provide parenting education and a community environment which may be lacking for many new arrivals and working mothers. Many new arrivals will have limited support networks after moving for work or from overseas and may find parenting norms in New Zealand to be very different to those in their country of birth, meaning that Playcentre can be a wonderful introduction to Kiwi life. Similarly, mothers who return to work may lack the support of other parents in their immediate circle of colleagues and feel socially isolated with limited time available outside home and work demands.

## A recipe for success

Here's some of the things that worked in our Playcentre and might help you to welcome both working mothers and families who are new to New Zealand.

- Be ready to welcome **au pairs, nannies and PORSE providers** – work out your policy and expectations in advance
- **Build a relationship with other ECE providers locally** to help with a smooth transition between Playcentre and other ECE settings – maybe you can invite the children from a local daycare to visit Playcentre for a session
- Facilitate **on and off** enrolment for those families with circumstances that change over time
- **Be flexible about the mandatory number of sessions** for those families with inflexible work commitments
- **Make the most of parental leave** – this might be the ideal opportunity for a working mother to undertake adult education and get their Playcentre qualifications or it might be the best time for building relationships with a family whilst they enjoy the relative downtime
- Remember that **capacity and preference for officer roles will vary** – some working mothers will prefer easy, regular jobs such as shopping or resources whilst others will prefer flexible jobs such as PR which can grow and shrink as workloads vary
- Consider whether **job-shares might work** for roster slots or officer roles to spread the load across families with working mothers
- Find out whether it's possible in your area for members to have their **assignments marked in their native language**
- **Te Reo pronunciation is familiar to Chinese speakers** so Chinese families make excellent champions for the use of Te Reo
- **Invite immigrant families to bring their culture into Playcentre** – perhaps by taking over sessions at Diwali or Chinese New Year
- Think about which **officer roles might be easier for members who are still learning or gaining confidence in English** – jobs which focus on the use of numbers rather than words might be easier; some people will prefer process-focussed roles, others will be more comfortable working with people
- Make sure you **explain Kiwi traditions to immigrant families** eg bringing a plate, help out with recipes for baking and welcome the opportunity to try new foods on session



# My own experience as a working mother and immigrant at Playcentre

Jo arrived in New Zealand in 2009 and both her children were born here. They are true barefoot Kiwi kids – thanks to Playcentre. Also thanks to Playcentre, Jo has a wonderful circle of friends and feels very much at home in her adopted community. She returned to work twice after having her children – and then returned to Playcentre each time as well. Jo is a member of her workplace Diversity and Inclusion Council and chairwoman of a large Auckland-based women’s network. She shares her experience of Playcentre below.



My own experience of Playcentre has been as a working mother and an immigrant. I was not alone in that experience in our Playcentre community.

During my time at Playcentre, we had families with roots in Thailand, Australia, India, Korea, China, South Africa, Switzerland, Ireland and Great Britain. We also had members who travelled

overseas, who went home and who emigrated, leaving our centre a richer place for their contribution.

We had stay-at-home fathers and we had au pairs and nannies who became active members of our centre and our community. We had mothers who worked from home and in the city, part-time and full-time, in their own businesses, in a family business, in the public sector and in the private sector. We also had mothers who studied and mothers who were very happy not to be in paid work.

Playcentre was exactly what I needed as a working mother who was new to New Zealand. It was an instant village in which to raise my children. The adult education was invaluable for me, so far from grandparents and aunts and uncles. The sessions were a welcome relief from my male-dominated working life, a place where I could admit to the struggles and embrace the joys of parenthood. Playcentre revealed to me many wonderful aspects of Kiwi culture (mostly focussed on kai), opened the door to te ao Māori and started me on the lifelong journey of learning te reo Māori.

Since leaving Playcentre, when I went



back to full time work and my oldest daughter graduated, my connection to the wider Playcentre community has continued. It is my Playcentre friends who look out for my children at school and at pre-school, who run the cross country course with them when I can't be there and who keep me sane with pot luck suppers and school holiday playdates.





# Waste warriors

In its second year as a 'Resource Wise School' Otumoetai Playcentre has continued its commitment to sustainability. The Tauranga City Council initiative challenges schools to reduce waste going to landfill. In just one year, the Playcentre has improved its landfill diversion rate from 74 percent to an impressive 92 percent. So how did they get there? Jodie Moore explains.

Otumoetai's results are even more impressive when considering the typical rate of diversion in preschools in the region is about 65 percent. Passionate Playcentre whānau have been undertaking the following:

- Utilising a compost bin for green waste
- Providing towel dispensers and reusable cleaning cloths
- Beeswax wraps made on session
- Coffee grounds are placed directly on the gardens
- Playdough is dried out for use in carpentry or taken home by whānau
- Advertising waste-free parenting workshops to members
- Attending a cloth nappy workshop
- Implementing a Terracycle toothcare waste collection point
- Diligent recycling of paper and cardboard
- Repurposing unclaimed tamariki artwork for greeting cards and wrapping paper
- Committed to being a glitter free centre

With the support of Sue Matthews, a Resource Wise School advisor (and Playcentre Mum from way back) a worm farm is being used for our Centre's kai scraps. Sue has also worked alongside members and tamariki to learn about waste reduction by running The Great Waste Race; a fun and interactive session where tamariki identify which bin different items of waste go in. Casey Thomas from Zero Waste Education has also been on session to give tamariki the opportunity to get up close and personal with a bunch of composting worms.

Otumoetai Playcentre is only one step away from achieving Level 4 of the council programme, and this requires the implementation of a policy to continue the centre's reduction of single use packaging. Watch this space!



# Helpful Resources and Handy Hints

- Kate Meads Waste-free parenting workshops nationwide: <http://www.thenappylady.co.nz/>
- Enviroschools programme is a great source of inspiration: <http://www.enviroschools.org.nz/>
- Local council – check for waste minimisation programmes or funding
- Terracycle offers options to recycle problem waste e.g plastic yoghurt pouches, toothcare waste etc available online: <https://www.terracycle.co.nz/en-NZ/>
- Zero waste Early Childhood Facebook group – for support and ideas.
- Glitter alternatives – flower petals, hole-punched leaves, tissue paper and coloured paper. Stamps and punches can be found in craft stores and there's a wide range of options including star shapes, heart shapes, flowers, ferns and butterflies.
- Envirohub Bay of Plenty provide workshops and other information on environmental and sustainability issues: <https://envirohub.org.nz/>

## Beeswax wrap recipe:

100g Beeswax (pellets will melt quicker).

20g Pine rosin.

3 teaspoons Jojoba oil.

Squares of light cotton (washed and dried in desired sizes).

This recipe makes six 30cm x 30cm pieces.

Pot, paintbrush, foil, pestle and mortar.



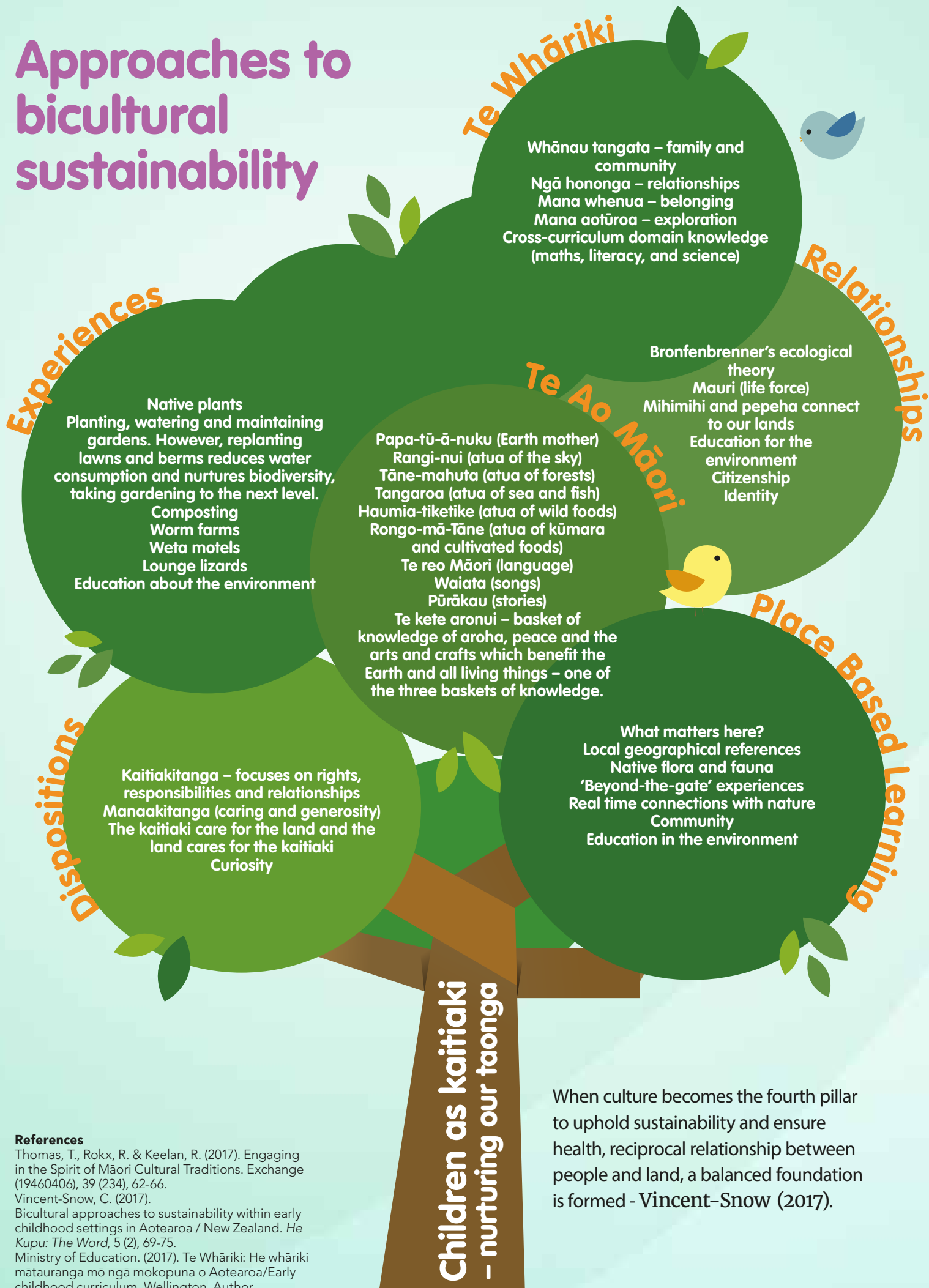
## Steps:

1. Melt the beeswax in the pot.
2. Crush the rosin with the pestle and mortar, then add to the wax. Melt over a medium heat and stir until melted together.
3. Add the jojoba oil and stir well.
4. Preheat your oven to 100C.
5. Place your cotton square on the foil.
6. Use the paintbrush to apply the wax/oil blend evenly to one side of the cotton (heating it in the oven helps to even out the mixture).
7. Put the foil and fabric on a tray and put in the oven for 5 minutes.
8. Take it out of the oven and check the wax is now evenly soaked through to the back. If it has not, return it to the oven for 3 more minutes, adding more wax if required.
9. Once the back is evenly coated use tongs to remove the beeswax wrap from the foil and hang it somewhere for a few minutes to set.

## Hints and Tips:

- All ingredients are available on Trademe.
- Cutting the cotton with pinking shears will help to prevent fraying.
- Remember the golden rule with Beeswax wraps – No meat and no heat! Clean with a gentle soap and cool water. If, over time, your wraps need refreshing pop them in a warm oven for a few minutes or iron between greaseproof paper.
- Alternatively, you can purchase the wax/oil blend as a solid block from Dees Bees. This can be posted out to you with a full set of instructions.

# Approaches to bicultural sustainability



## Experiences

Native plants  
Planting, watering and maintaining gardens. However, replanting lawns and berms reduces water consumption and nurtures biodiversity, taking gardening to the next level.  
Composting  
Worm farms  
Weta motels  
Lounge lizards  
Education about the environment

## Te Whāriki

Whānau tangata – family and community  
Ngā hononga – relationships  
Mana whenua – belonging  
Mana aotūroa – exploration  
Cross-curriculum domain knowledge (maths, literacy, and science)

## Relationships

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory  
Mauri (life force)  
Mihimihi and pepeha connect to our lands  
Education for the environment  
Citizenship  
Identity

## Te Ao Māori

Papa-tū-ā-nuku (Earth mother)  
Rangi-nui (atua of the sky)  
Tāne-mahuta (atua of forests)  
Tangaroa (atua of sea and fish)  
Haumia-tiketike (atua of wild foods)  
Rongo-mā-Tāne (atua of kūmara and cultivated foods)  
Te reo Māori (language)  
Waiata (songs)  
Pūrākau (stories)  
Te kete aronui – basket of knowledge of aroha, peace and the arts and crafts which benefit the Earth and all living things – one of the three baskets of knowledge.

## Place Based Learning

What matters here?  
Local geographical references  
Native flora and fauna  
‘Beyond-the-gate’ experiences  
Real time connections with nature  
Community  
Education in the environment

## Dispositions

Kaitiakitanga – focuses on rights, responsibilities and relationships  
Manaakitanga (caring and generosity)  
The kaitiaki care for the land and the land cares for the kaitiaki  
Curiosity

**Children as kaitiaki  
– nurturing our taonga**

When culture becomes the fourth pillar to uphold sustainability and ensure health, reciprocal relationship between people and land, a balanced foundation is formed - Vincent-Snow (2017).

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# Breaking new ground

The new adult education programme is being rolled out across the country. *Playcentre Journal* asked three of the first participants to share their thoughts on the first step of their Playcentre education journey – the Playcentre Introductory Award.

My daughter Harriet, 2, and I started Playcentre in term two of this year and I was keen to get stuck into the adult education side of things. I'm also on the education team at our Centre and I figured it was good to lead by example and 'walk the walk' so I could 'talk the talk'. I've really enjoyed the workshops so far and the assignments have challenged the mummy brain. I feel a lot more confident when I'm on session and am able to continue to apply my learnings over time. It's pretty unique to be able to learn more about early childhood education and to be completely involved in your child's development and learning, so that is really driving me.

My first term I felt a bit lost at Playcentre, but this term I have a much greater understanding and feel a lot more confident, and in turn my daughter is also a lot more comfortable on session. Adult education helps you feel like an important part of the puzzle to make Playcentre work. It's awesome to know about Te Whāriki and really get a good understanding of what it is all about, I'm fascinated to see how we apply this on session and in our planning for our children's learning. It's so awesome being there with your child and seeing them learning right in front of your eyes – it's inspiring stuff.

I've really enjoyed the play workshops, and have attended more than just the compulsory one for the B401 module. This has helped with my confidence on session and there have been plenty of take away lessons to apply at home with my daughter. I'm keen to try and do play workshops in areas that aren't exactly my area of expertise or interest. It's been great fun checking out the other Playcentres and seeing how they are set up as they are all so different. It's great to meet other Playcentre parents and hear about their experiences and even to bring some new and fresh ideas back to your own centre.

I'm looking forward to continuing to contribute to my Playcentre and hopefully I'll be able to hand in and pass those assignments quickly so I can continue moving into the Playcentre Educator Award (PEA) when that becomes available.

**Margaret Timms – Howick Playcentre**



I joined about ten other parents for the first of two five-hour teaching days that will make up my PIA. We were asked to arrive 15 minutes early to complete one-off applications forms for study credits and police checks, and to bring two forms of identification. Elizabeth from Newtown Playcentre ran the day. I found her facilitation made the absolute most of everyone's precious time away from families. She delivered an intensive, fast paced, fun, relevant and interesting day and I went home immediately able to see new things about how the adults and child at our house interact, play and learn. I feel the learnings from the day came easily to mind and I like to think have added quality to my parenting, plus provided clear ideas to share with our whānau to enable them too.

Bonnie, 3, was supportive of me going to 'parent school' especially as I'd explained I was going to learn how to play better. She observes my study and work over the weeks with interest. We are learning together.

Back to Playcentre – here too I experienced immediately improved recognition and responsiveness as well as starting to decode common terms like 'scaffolding' and 'extending' play and 'positive guidance'.

**Josephine Tucker – Hataitai Playcentre**



As a Playcentre kid myself, I had always planned on taking my child to Playcentre. Some of my earliest memories were sandpit volcanoes, wooden block towers and playdough taste-testing. To be able to take my daughter Holly, 1, to the same Playcentre that I had attended was exciting for me and my entire family. While I always appreciated the experiences, it wasn't until I attended the Playcentre Introductory Award workshops that I truly began to understand child-initiated learning and the benefits that it had for Holly's development.

Initially I was reluctant to begin the workshops, unsure of how the workload would work with my schedule as a full-time student and stay at home mum. After the first workshop, I could see that the workload was definitely manageable, and the new learning was exciting as a first-time mum.

While my previous career in teaching and current postgraduate study had built an awareness of stages of development, the focus on the early years was new and exciting for me. The child-initiated play aspect of the Playcentre philosophy aligns strongly with building intrinsic motivation and developing curiosity in the world around us. During the workshops we explored the difference between parent and child-initiated play and how we can support our children through their development. Reading and discussing schemas and urges was a new area of learning for me.

As a first time mum, I have loved getting to know other parents in my community and building supportive relationships for Holly and myself. During the workshops it was great to meet other parents, share our parenting experiences, brainstorm ideas and innovations for our centres, and build our collective understanding of the Playcentre philosophy and how we put this into practice.

While our Playcentre journey has only just begun, I can already see the impact that it has had on my daughter with her new friends, confidence, new experiences, communication skills and curiosity. However, I think I'm the one that Playcentre has impacted the most.

**Jody Garland – Haumoana Playcentre**

## Handy hints for making education accessible to members

**Change the Centre culture.** Promote education as something positive and a choice. We choose to participate in the education programme because it enriches the learning opportunities for our tamariki; it challenges us to grow as educators and learners; it gives us skills we can transfer into future employment and community opportunities. Not because 'we have to do it' to be members of Playcentre.

**Utilise people who are inspirational.** The best education officers and teaching staff are those who are passionate about education themselves and can promote it positively. No experience is necessary to become a Centre education officer – just a love of learning and willingness to encourage others. Knowledge and experience is essential for teaching staff, but without inspiration it is meaningless.

**Create synergy.** Create learning opportunities for trainees to work through the programme together and create their own support networks. Make workshops and support sessions enjoyable times, where trainees come together to have fun learning together.

**Consider the timing of workshops.** For many, daytime workshops are preferable as they don't cut into whānau time. In a Playcentre context this also means providing tamariki with fun-filled sessions so that they are having too much fun to want to sit around in a workshop. For trainees who can't focus with children around, an evening or weekend workshop may work better.

**Be available and open to support trainees with special support needs.** This reaches beyond the narrowly-defined 'special needs' to include wider whānau needs – how do we cater for single parents? Shift workers? Families in shared care arrangements? Working parents? Put support systems in place so that the education team is aware of potential barriers to education.

**Celebrate!** Regularly acknowledge the support 'behind the scenes' from partners and whānau. Recognise the accomplishments of trainees, the efforts of teaching staff, and express gratitude to the volunteers that make it happen.

**Kara Daly – Playcentre Aotearoa**



# Playcentre blossoms

**Frances Martin is a fairly new arrival to Cornwall Park Playcentre, having moved to Hawke's Bay from Christchurch in January. This meant that when animated discussions about the Blossom Parade float began many months ago, she had very little understanding about the event or what it meant to the community. Frances discusses her Playcentre's involvement in the Hawke's Bay tradition.**



In Hawke's Bay the beginning of spring is celebrated with the annual Hastings Blossom Parade; a procession of floats, fabulousness and fun through Hastings. Each year our Playcentre joins in the festivities, decorating a float and participating in the parade along with other community groups and local businesses.

The design for this year's float was, by necessity, modest and achievable. On session large cardboard flowers were painted by the centre's tamariki. Huge petals were daubed in every colour, while banners were covered in childish footprints in Playcentre's characteristic colours. I was still struggling to imagine how this float would look until, in the weeks leading up to the parade, charming photos emerged of smiling centre members from previous parades.

The day before the parade, I arrived at our float building workshop with a bundle of toetoe stuffed into my car. It was then that I saw a very handsome, very old, duck egg blue Bedford truck parked on the lawn, already adorned with colourful flowers. Inside I found our Playcentre friends drinking tea and snacking, an apparently essential part of any float building experience. Later, we took a walk to Playcentre with a wheelbarrow and six children to collect indispensable items like costumes and instruments. The rest of the day continued in a warm, collaborative fashion. Occasionally bits and pieces

were added to the truck, tamariki played, cups of tea were consumed, and the spring sun shone. At the end of the day we manoeuvred the truck into the garage and said goodbye until morning.

The day of the parade began with last minute jobs like picking fresh flowers to adorn sun hats and headbands. We all watched anxiously as our float's driver, a Playcentre dad, fired up the rickety old truck and it began its slow, stuttering trip to our destination.

At 11am the floats lined up along Lyndon Road, a mass of colour and quirky character encompassing everything from marching girls to steam punk bikes. Our float was comparatively small but was, without doubt, the cutest thanks to the charming old Bedford and the adorable children's decorations. Before too long we piled onto the back of the truck: children, parents, Koro with his guitar, and enthusiastic graduates. Walking alongside were parents with pushchairs or babies in carriers, dads, and beaming life members. Our typically busy and bouncy children were, miraculously, stunned into stillness.

The parade, which lasted for about



an hour, was a blur of noise, bubbles, snacks and Koro's hilarious improvised songs. The crowd were phenomenal, each street lined with people waving and smiling as we waved and smiled back. When we finally returned to the pitstop, our cramped legs had turned to jelly, making the climb off the truck a bit of a feat. We all said goodbye with enormous grins, still animated by the energy of the day.

Playcentre is an essential part of local communities, and getting involved in local events helps to maintain this. All of the planning and preparation, chatting and decorating, helps to strengthen our relationships and to foster our sense of community. Ask yourselves what events happen in your community that your Playcentre could participate in? I couldn't recommend it highly enough.

For the next edition of the Playcentre Journal, we are looking for articles around 'place-based learning', like the above. If your Centre has a story to tell, please email [journal@playcentre.org.nz](mailto:journal@playcentre.org.nz)



# A storm of bubbles

... said Lilou as she waved her hands through the hundreds of tiny ngā

The precise spherical shape and beautiful, swirling science and we all know that

## Social and Emotional

- Bubbles can be enjoyed by all ages, alone or with others regardless of ability. This can foster communication and social skills as children blow and catch bubbles together, sharing their joy and excitement.
- Mastering the necessary skills to blow a bubble successfully is satisfying. The motivation to persist is rewarded by a glossy bubble!

## Physical

- Spatial awareness – reaching and jumping up to catch bubbles
- Hand eye coordination – to lift wand to their face (and not their eye) and tracking a bubble as it floats in the air
- Developing muscles in jaw and mouth for blowing/not sucking
- Fine motor development – holding and controlling different sized wands
- Body awareness – the bubbles are on your hand/hair etc
- Learning how successfully blow a bubble by moderating their breath

## Cognitive

### Maths:

- Shape. The first shape children usually recognise is a circle or a sphere. Infants first see round shapes in their mother's breast and people's heads. They soon

start to recognise circles and spheres in other places.

- Mathematical language i.e lots, many, big, large, huge, small, tiny, little, clusters, hundreds.

### Science:

- Air pressure and force – children see that when they first blow, the bubble starts out long, but as it separates from the wand, it forms itself into a perfect sphere, because the air pressure outside the bubble is the same as the air pressure inside, so no matter what shape the wand is, the bubble will always be a sphere.
- Children experience the viscosity of the bubble mixture. The surface tension can be seen on the bubble wand as the air is carefully blown onto the soapy film.
- Mixing elements and understanding proportions of soap with glycerine.

## Language

- children narrate the look, feel and action of the bubble
- positional language i.e. runga – up, teitei – high, raro – down
- verbs: pāto – pop, pākaru – burst, tere – floating
- adjectives: nui – big, āniwaniwa – rainbow, iti – little, pīataata – shiny



## Links to Te Whāriki:–

### Mana atua – Wellbeing

#### – Children gain:

- an increasing ability to determine their own actions and make their own choices;
- a respect for rules about harming others and the environment and an understanding of the reasons for such rules.



# Bubbles!

Blow the bubble wand vigorously to produce mirumiru – bubbles.

The different colors of a bubble make it a true wonder of the world. Blowing bubbles are SO much fun!



## Mana tangata – Contribution – Children:

- are encouraged to learn with and alongside others, using a range of strategies and skills to play and learn with others.

## Mana aotūroa – Exploration – Children develop:

- confidence in control of their bodies;

- working theories for making sense of the natural, social, physical and material worlds;
- the knowledge that trying things out, exploration, and curiosity are important and valued ways of learning;
- strategies for actively exploring and making sense of the world by using their bodies, including active exploration with all the senses, and the use of tools, materials, and equipment to extend skills;
- an understanding of the nature and properties of a range of substances, such as sand, water, ice, bubbles, blocks, and paper.

## Mana reo – Communication – Children develop:

- verbal and non-verbal communication skills for a range of purposes;
- responsive and reciprocal skills, such as turn-taking and offering;
- an increasing understanding of nonverbal messages, including an ability to attend to the non-verbal requests and suggestions of others;
- an ability to express their feelings and emotions in a range of appropriate nonverbal ways.

## Learning Dispositions

Playfulness – harikoa

Hiringa – persisting with uncertainty and challenge

Haututū – curiosity – pataitai –

taking an interest – participating and contributing  
Being involved – managing self  
Māia – confidence and competence  
Māramatanga – developing understanding

## Bubble set up

- Offer different implements (not just traditional “wands”)
- Provide children with florist wire to create different shaped wands; can you make a star shape bubble?
- For best results set up just after it’s rained. The air humidity makes the bubbles last longer

## Safety

- Have a bucket of water and towel handy. Bubble mix can easily be transferred onto children’s faces and into their eyes.
- Encourage children to blow the bubbles away from other people.
- Supervise!

**Catherine Armstrong  
and Denise Heald  
– Mt Albert Playcentre**

# Playcentre

Str  
20

Playcentre is a family organisation where:

- ★ we empower adults and children to play, work, learn and grow together
- ★ we honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and celebrate people's uniqueness
- ★ we value and affirm parents as the first and best educators of their children

so that whānau are strengthened and communities enriched.

## GOAL 1

**Responsive to children and their families/whānau**

### Strategies

**Broaden Playcentre approaches to reflect the needs of different communities**

- Explore, enable and implement options for different delivery approaches that meet the needs of communities
- Develop and implement a national Playcentre home-based programme to respond to families needing more childcare options
- Develop and implement initiatives for Playcentre to be inclusive of whānau Māori and Pasifika
- Provide information and training to help Playcentres build meaningful, sustainable relationships with their local iwi and other Māori organisations

**Develop the Playcentre adult education programme to reflect the needs of the different Playcentre communities**

- Identify and implement improvements to the Playcentre education curriculum and delivery to make it more relevant for Māori and Pasifika communities
- Review and implement new approaches to managing delivery of Playcentre adult education across the organisation to raise participation, increase quality, reduce duplication, and enhance consistency
- Consider how to make Playcentre Education more accessible for learners with specific needs

www.

“Whānau tup



# Strategic Plan 2014-2019



## GOAL 2

### Less admin Strategies

#### Review and improve Playcentre's organisational structure

- Implement a transitional Federation structure that will create strategic change
- Develop and implement a sustainable and cost effective 'whole of Playcentre' (nationwide) structure that addresses compliance and administration issues to gain efficiency where it matters and focuses on strengthening and growing Centres and increasing participation long term
- Develop a long term national property strategy

#### Simplify, streamline and centralise Playcentre's operational environment and foster best practice

- Implement a simple centralised web-based information management system that reduces duplication, compliance workloads, enhances the organisation's knowledge base and promotes sustainability
- Utilise the new system to further develop best practice within Playcentre

#### Strengthen Centres' capacity to operate as co-operatives and attract and retain new members

- Develop nationwide professional development focussed on building strong cooperative cultures, attracting and retaining new members and strengthening centres long-term

## GOAL 3

### Promote Playcentre Strategies

#### At a national level through advocacy, promotions and relationship development

- Recruit a national communications manager to drive PR and promotions

#### At a local Playcentre level through the power of the Playcentre whānau

- Develop national guidelines and resources for encouraging promotional activity at local level including word of mouth and engagement in local events



## GOAL 4

### More Money Strategies

#### Increase MOE funding

- Develop a strategy for and actively renegotiate MOE funding
- Advocate for funding for support of ELL, including for technology support

#### Develop new funding relationships with Government

- Actively develop a funding relationship with the Ministry of Social Development
- Engage the Ministry for Primary Industries and Te Puni Kōkiri to understand opportunities for funding support

#### Build on Playcentre's professional development and training capability and resources

- Develop Playcentre adult education offerings to target parenting and early childhood educators outside of Playcentres
- Identify and target external sources of professional development funding

#### Develop revenue streams that build on Playcentre's strengths

- Actively support Playcentre Publications Ltd/Ako Books to grow its activities in the promotion and sale of publishable education material
- Develop an internal innovation programme to model and scale new programmes and revenue generating opportunities

Playcentre.org.nz 0800 PLAYNZ

“Whānau ngātahi – families growing together”



# Kids in the Kitchen

At Terrace End Playcentre our tamariki are empowered to make choices about their learning, and process cooking is no different. From the very beginning of the cooking process – from choosing the recipe right through to tidying up – our tamariki are involved, often taking the lead.

Currently, we have some very confident and competent bakers in our two and three-year-olds. They are organisers, risk-takers and problem solvers. Quite often they are found supporting each other and our younger tamariki to complete a final product. With the desire for process cooking to be lead by our tamariki, kaiako are open to any deviation from the recipe, which is often in the form of chocolate chips

or sultanas. Our kaiako are very quickly told 'hands off' if they get too close to our budding little chefs.

Away from the process cooking bench, tamariki are invited to transfer these skills into other areas of play. An outside bench is a popular place, as is the playdough table where tamariki engage in pretend play to practice different parts of the process.

## Tips and Tricks to our successful process cooking:

- Do it often! The more often our tamariki follow this process, the more they grow in their independence and the easier it is.
- Empower tamariki to take the lead on what/when/how process cooking happens
- Have a designated space and easily accessible equipment – uncluttered and solely for process cooking
- Focus on the process – not the end product!



# Te Tunu Kai – Cooking

## Kupu – Words

Hiakai – hungry

Tina – lunch

Māku – for me

Māu – for you

Reka – delicious

Mārau – fork

Māripi – knife

Koko – spoon

Pereti – plate



## Rerenga whai take – Handy phrases

E hiakai ana koe? Are you hungry?

He aha te kai e hiahia ana koe? What would you like?

He tino reka ngā kai – this food is delicious

Mā wai tēnei kai? Who is this food for?

Kei hea ngā mārau? Where are the forks?

E hia ngā kokoiti huka? How many teaspoons of sugar?

Tāwhiuwhiuhia ngā heki – whip the eggs

Haere mai ki te kai – Come and eat

He inu māu? Would you like a drink?

## What tamariki learn during cooking

- Mana atua-wellbeing: understanding about hygiene and food safety, knowledge about where food comes from, healthy eating options, what to look for in food labels.
- Mana whenua-belonging: taking part in caring for this place (eg, not only washing up/tidying up, but knowledge about harvesting food, gardening, sustainability), linking home with Centre, cultural knowledge.
- Mana tangata-contribution: teamwork, patience,
- Mana reo-communication: recognising mathematical symbols and concepts, measuring, fractions, counting, numbers, questioning, using different materials to express ideas, reading for enjoyment as well as for purpose, understanding print carries a message
- Mana aotūroa-exploration: experimenting, moving body confidently and challenging themselves (eg, holding and using a knife, grater, peeler), curiosity

# “Food should always be a pleasure” – The wise words of Dr Emmi Pikler

Northland-based early childhood educator Kate Liddington recently got to experience another adult feed her yoghurt. While it was only five teaspoons, it was shovelled in and her mouth wiped clean with the spoon. Prompted by that experience, she reflects on her own teaching practice below.

We all know the feeling of sitting down to a beautiful meal, taking our time to savour the tastes that we enjoy most. We choose when we are ready for another mouthful and when we are full. We engage with those around us, feeling the enjoyment of eating together. Yet for infants mealtimes are often rushed. The feeding adult wanting to get the ‘job’ done. Spoonfuls shovelled in before the infant is ready. The spoon scraped along the child’s mouth and chin to pick up what has spilled. Face and hands wiped quickly and not very gently with a cold cloth.

A respectful practice is one that engages the infant as an active participant in all matters relating to their body. Feeding an infant is a special care moment – a quality one on one time between child and adult. When we focus all our attention on the feeding child we are able to tune in and read their cues. These cues indicate the amazing capabilities that even the youngest infants possess; like the capability to indicate when they are ready for another mouthful or when they have finished. Slowing down during mealtimes also allows the infant to explore with the texture and taste of the food they are eating, they can enjoy it just as we as adults do.

Recently I sat with J, aged almost five months, on my lap (his body supported at a 45 degree angle so he didn’t have to support himself in a sitting position which his muscles are not ready for yet). With all my attention on J I noticed that he reached for the spoon when he was ready for another mouthful. He did this several times before wanting to hold onto the spoon by himself. It’s a hard navigation to the mouth to begin with. Food did get on his forehead, eye, nose and cheeks before the spoon was manoeuvred to his mouth.

Looking past the ‘mess’ of the food everywhere lets focus on the big picture....what is J’s perspective of this experience:

He is demonstrating independence.



He is building the coordination skills of feeding himself and in time will have mastered this skill. He is taking responsibility for his wellbeing by feeding himself at just five months of age. He is learning about the enjoyment of food and spending time with an adult who cares for him. He is learning that food serves a purpose to fuel his body. He is tuning in and listening to his body about when he is hungry and full. J is building trust in his own abilities by an adult having trust in his capabilities.

There is really a lot happening for

J just by being given the time and freedom to feed himself.

As the adult participating in this experience I am further reminded of a young infants capabilities and of trusting and respecting that they undertake challenges when they feel ready to. Slowing down and being fully present with an infant really is a marvelous moment of observation and relationship building.

# Kaniere's colourful kitchen

**Kaniere Playcentre undertook the massive task of upgrading its original kitchen from the 1970s to a modern new one. The project was led by dedicated grants officer at the time, Robyn Cuff, with the help of centre families, local businesses and grants. President Pania and member Amey reflect on the huge undertaking.**



It was decided over several meetings in 2016 that we needed a new kitchen. The existing one was small and badly designed for purpose with very little storage and no clear distinction between kai and craft areas. We also had a pretty major silverfish infestation that was in the wood of the cupboards and surrounding areas. The kitchen hadn't been updated since the building opened in the 1970s.

We decided we wanted a complete new layout which was essentially two kitchens (one for kai and one for craft/paint/playdough/non-kai) so it had to be custom made. It was Robyn's idea to have a bench at the childrens' height. Previously we had a low table, that didn't fit the space well at all and was excluding a number of our tamariki from enjoying the space. Robyn's plan, a drop-down bench, was a one-off, special design to allow our tamariki to help in the kitchen without the need to stools or chairs, which can be a hazard around ovens.

We choose the only kitchen designer in Hokitika as we wanted to support local business. We then applied for grants. The kitchen upgrade was paid for through financial assistance supplied by grants from The Lions Foundation (donating \$15,000) and Air Rescue Services (donating \$2,000) towards the project. Robyn worked closely with Knocker at Ezy Kitchens/ Glacier Joinery to get the specifics right for the design and layout. She also organised a separate builder to come in to build the wall between the kitchen and the office/sleeping area. Re-wiring was also completed, and new kitchen appliances were purchased. Three parents and their tamariki were involved in choosing the colours for the cupboards and benchtops. We went with bold colours instead of typical neutrals to make it inviting for our tamariki. We also colour coded it – kai areas are green, non kai areas are blue – to help make sure these areas are kept separate.



We put the existing kitchen on Facebook, offering it to anyone that wanted to remove it themselves for a small donation. We then had to empty the kitchen (a big job!), and paint the walls and our new dividing wall. We had multiple keen parents helping with this job, and the paint was donated by a family member of one of our parents. The new kitchen was installed over the Christmas holidays. All of our Kaniere Playcentre whānau had very positive reactions; a lot of "wow, look at the colour of it" and "it looks so much bigger!"

We held an event, with Westland Mayor Bruce Smith officially opening it for us. This event was open to the public to celebrate the success of the project and included the usual speeches, cake, balloons and of course face painting! Our tamariki love helping out with baking and making playdough. It is great for them to be a part of these experiences enhancing belonging, agency and relationships with others.



Order your

**kawhe/coffee**

in Māori!

**He...**

Can I have a ...

**Kawhe**  
Coffee

**Pango poto**  
Short black

**Pango roa**  
Long black

**Mōwai**  
Flat white

**...koa**

...please



**E pēhea ana tō rā?**

How's your day going?

Size Rahi



**Paku**



**Hei heri atu**

Takeaway



**Anei, taku kapu mahi rua**

Here is my re-useable cup



**Waenga**



**Ki konei koa**

Have here thanks



**Nui**

#  
**TE  
REO  
KAWHE**



**KIA KAHA  
TE REO MĀORI**



# Why is Ngaio Playcentre (Still) Thriving?

An earlier version of this article was uploaded to the national Playcentre Facebook page in November 2017.

Since Susan Pearce first wrote about Ngaio's primary ECE policy last year, the cohort of 4-year-olds described below are now all at school. Ngaio currently has five 4-year-olds attending four sessions per week. In term three of this year, it was funded for 54 places on general sessions and another 15 on its weekly *Te Ata Reorua*, the bilingual session. Susan updates us on the situation at Ngaio today.



## Ngaio Playcentre today

Due to graduations and other departures Ngaio now has 19 whānau and employs a very recent and beloved Course 3 for three sessions per week. There are five C3s in the membership, but it needs the extra body so it can continue to offer four sessions a week to its 4 year olds, and three to its 3 year olds. This Primary ECE policy (see sidebar) is the bedrock of the centre and the membership considers it worth the financial outlay.

## Looking back

Walking into Ngaio Playcentre one morning with my then four-year-old, we saw a group of tamariki at the welcome table transforming a twiggy branch into a panoply of painted colours. Tom

greeted a close friend – they saw a lot of each other, spending four sessions together weekly.

Another group around the kai table ate second breakfast – a few three- and four-year-olds chatting with one of the duty parents, and a smaller two year old listening intently, as well as a baby in the highchair. In the music section, on the bike track and in the sandpit and barrel swing tamariki played and investigated raucously or quietly. At 24 tamariki, the session was close to our preferred limit.

The duty team of six had had a pre-session stand-up meeting and was communicating closely. We didn't then employ paid supervisors. Parents do one duty session per week, regardless of the number of their child's drop-

## What does 'Primary ECE' mean?

Ngaio Playcentre's policy didn't begin as stand-alone, but an approved amendment to Wellington Playcentre Association's enrolments and transitions policy. Its basis is that we require all tamariki to attend the full number of sessions offered to their age group. This means four-year-olds attend four or five sessions; three-year-olds attend three sessions; children over 2.5 years attend two; and under 2.5 attend one or two in the company of a caregiver.

Families who want an exemption to the policy (for example, because they have set specialist appointments for a child with special needs, because their tamaiti needs time to settle, or because they want to try kindy for a term), bring their request to a business meeting. An exemption is granted if the community sees that it's in the child's best interests. If granted, the exemption lasts just one term.

Over the years, we've made a few tweaks to the original policy. For example, four and three-year-olds can now start their new drop-offs at the beginning of the term, rather than waiting until their birthday, if they want to. Any family can attend *Te Ata Reorua* as an extra or as part of their tamaiti's full entitlement.

offs. In early 2017 we received a four-year rating from the Education Review Office, so morale is high.

In Term 3 2017, as in Term 2, we ran four mixed-age morning sessions and *Te Ata Reorua*, the bilingual morning session. We had 27 families, and a bulge of 13 four-year-olds, along with

## Why Primary ECE?

- Older tamariki have close, reciprocal and responsive relationships with pakeke, because they see most adults several times a week.
- Tamariki are settled, because they are not experiencing another, different philosophy of child education elsewhere.
- Children experience a stable learning environment, seeing all their friends every session
- Older tamariki have more learning opportunities suited to their developmental stage.
- Using Ngaio Playcentre as their family's primary ECE means parents are aligned in how they expect children will be treated, and how play will be facilitated. This facilitates effective problem-solving.
- The whānau's and children's bonds to Playcentre and to the Playcentre community are strengthened with increased attendance – we are a strong, close and supportive community because of this policy.
- Our workload is spread more fully and we are able to tackle high-level challenges with strong support from our members, who aren't overloaded. This creates sustainable passion.
- Our twice-termly session meetings are well attended, and our monthly business meetings are quorate.
- The centre's finances are hugely strengthened by additional funding from ECE 20 hours and standard ECE funding. This means, for example, we're able to employ former Playcentre parents to support tamariki who have particular challenges, but aren't covered by MoE support.

seven three-year-olds. And because of our Primary ECE policy those tamariki took up, respectively, four and three places each.

It's a big ask for families these days, for their children to attend three or four Playcentre mornings a week. We have parents working part-time who manage with the help of tupuna. We have a 'Caregiver's Agreement' that's often pulled out. We know our 'Primary ECE'



policy won't work for every Playcentre, but we wanted to tell other Playcentres how we manage so as to encourage conversation.

We have to work to find whānau who can do it. Our PR officer designed a postcard that we mail-dropped around the surrounding suburbs. We're gaining Instagram followers, we run a Facebook page with boosted posts, and we redesigned our website to be more inviting. When visiting whānau are obviously looking for a different structure, we give them the details

of nearby Playcentres like Wilton and Johnsonville.

### How Did Ngaio PC's 'Primary ECE' Policy Happen?

Eight years ago, Ngaio was in the midst of a long-running crisis familiar to many Playcentres. Drove of three and four-year-olds were leaving for kindy. The roster was impossible because of kindy days, and remaining parents split into kindy-Playcentre and Playcentre-only factions, with many doubtful Playcentre could sufficiently challenge





### What Has Ngaio Playcentre Learnt?

- Be very proud of what Playcentre offers – we have a legitimate (the best!) ECE model, all the way to school.
- Don't assume 'what sort' of whānau can do full entitlement – many demographics and income levels are represented in Ngaio's membership.
- Be prepared to say a timely 'no' to friends who ask for too many exemptions. It's hard, but necessary.
- Keep communication in the open. Support members who may be shy about bringing issues to a business meeting. Talk often about the process of applying for an exemption.

they could attend more than one or two days at Playcentre, the kindly refused.

Crookston says members began to realise that "we should have been standing up and saying, 'We believe this to be an excellent educational facility, and we should promote it as such, and in order to give your children this education, we need our parents to use Ngaio Playcentre as their primary ECE'".

The kōrero swirled. Feelings ran high. Eventually the roster officer protested to the President.

four-year-olds. A very few members did all the hard work, and key office holders were unconvinced about the value of Playcentre philosophy.

According to past members, the community had discussed ideas around 'primary ECE' many times since bulk funding of Playcentre started. Brooklyn was following such a policy, and Wilton Playcentre then had a strong culture of children continuing at Playcentre all the way to school.

But every time, the conversation caused more friction because it was never resolved in policy. Amy Crookston – former President, currently PR – says "we had a lot of infighting. People sniping at each other and talking behind each other's backs".

The advent of ECE 20 'free' hours brought it to a head. When Playcentre asked Ngaio Kindergarten if tamariki could attend fewer days than offered so





Crookston, at that point doing both kindy and Playcentre, says "I was one of the people contacting her at the last minute, giving her all of ten days notice before term, saying 'I need to drop two of my son's sessions'. I had no idea what impact I was having."

In 2011, then-President Sarah Baylis and VP Jacqui Bird decided it was time to act definitively. After careful consideration they initiated a 'Strengthening Ngaio Playcentre' membership-wide discussion. This was facilitated by a professional mediator, a past Playcentre member, Madeline Taylor.

At the workshop, members were divided into five groups. All groups were deliberately split between factions to allow everyone to share their perspectives. Each group moved around five pieces of A1, headed up with the five areas members had said they considered important to the centre:

- Promotion of Playcentre Through to School
- Supporting 4-year-olds, and our roles as teachers to 4-year-olds
- Mixed age and spread of ages on sessions
- Roster Management
- Office Holder Roles

The groups defined Ngaio's core problem in each area. For 'Promotion

of Playcentre', the transcribed problem reads 'We do not make it clear to new members that our expectation is children will take up their full entitlement [of sessions] through to school – this leads to social connection issues for children and adults / lack of community of learning.'

The suggestion arose of a 'full entitlement' policy, along with a 'grandparenting' clause that would

allow families already using kindy to continue with the arrangement until graduation to school. This was to ensure that the new policy acted in the best interests of those children who had ongoing friendships at their other ECE.

At the August 2011 business meeting, after much discussion, the new policy passed. There was a long transition period. Crookston: 'There were still factions, for two years, because you had the grandparenting-kindy faction, and the Playcentre-only faction.' An exemption clause immediately began to open up communication. "No longer people whispering in corners, telling one or two people they were thinking of going to kindy, but of operating without prejudice, and allowing people the freedom to decide which ECE they would go to."

Months after the policy passed, a very tough business meeting saw many tears, when two families applying for a second term of exemptions had their requests denied. No-one wanted to say no to their friends, but ultimately the community felt that for the policy to work, you had to go all in and stick to it, and that long-term exemptions weakened Ngaio Playcentre. "We shouldn't have let it go on that long," Crookston says.

A child comes with a whānau, and Playcentre is not the best fit for every whānau's needs. As a centre we now respect this, and demand respect in return by asking that whānau be upfront





and make a choice between Playcentre and other ECEs.

Occasionally, families still leave Ngaio Playcentre for kindy. But there's no angst. Often families return for Matariki or Fish 'n Chip nights.

#### Looking forward

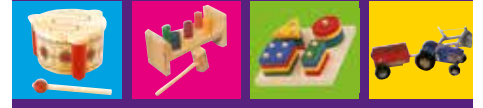
Sarah Baylis, who went on to serve as President of Wellington Playcentre Association as President and treasurer, says, "In order to strengthen Playcentre throughout New Zealand, we need to live our philosophy, 'Whānau tupu ngātahi' / Parents are the best first teachers of their children'. This is what makes Playcentre so special. It is also our point of difference to all the other ECEs out there including kindy. No other ECE can ever make that claim.

We need to treasure this and pass it on to future families embarking on their Playcentre and parenting journeys."

I believe Playcentre's unique ECE model could be a central facet of answers Aotearoa finds to our future challenges. We need to hold onto it.

At Ngaio Playcentre we know there are no simple answers for centres facing sustainability challenges. And we face the usual thorny issues of any voluntary organisation comprised of tired parents.

But we have a solid foundation from which we tackle those problems. We're excited about the future, and we hope our overwhelmingly positive experience with a Primary ECE policy might provoke some discussion in Playcentre at large.



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**WHY SHOP ANYWHERE ELSE!**

# Grants officer 101

So, you've put your hand up (or been gently persuaded) to be your Centre's grants officer. What now? The *Playcentre Journal* asked some seasoned pros for their best tips and tricks on how to make the most out of your role. First tip: photocopy these pages and pop it in your grants officer's folder!

## Know what you can apply for and when

I put together a funding calendar, at the start of the year and I systematically work through each month and – time permitting – try to get one application out per month. I'm also a mum of three boys under five-years-old, have my own consultancy business, and am the President of our local Toy Library, so some months I drop the ball, but this calendar does keep me focused.

Use Generosity to discover grants you didn't even know existed. Most local councils may pay for the subscription so their ratepayers can access it – if you don't know, then ask at your library or council.

## Choose two to three projects and one or two operational costs that will be your funding priority for the year

Having a planned approach like this means you can duplicate content across more than one funding application – it pays to have many irons in the fire, and if they miraculously all come off, then you can easily have a conversation with the trust or grant provider. More often than not, they're happy for you to reallocate the funds to another project.

## Spend the time crafting one exceptional application and use it as the base for all other ones

I have one master document that contains all the governance info (charities number etc), as well as our purpose, objectives, community benefit, and the like. This information

is so stock-standard across all funding applications so it is an easy copy and paste exercise once you've crafted a really sound response. There is no need to recreate the wheel every time.

## Focus on features and benefits

Clearly state what will be done, and why. The why is key. This tells the funder exactly what the benefit to the community will be from investing in your organisation or initiative.

And lastly, don't get discouraged. It can be draining spending time on applications that get declined, but when you get a win, it makes it all worth it!

**Kylie Mouat**  
Otorohanga Playcentre

# Most grant applications will want the following information:

## Who are you? / Who will benefit from this grant?

- Make sure you include information about what Playcentre is all about. Talk about the importance of child-led play and use our strapline Whānau Tupu Ngātahi – Families Growing Together. Don't assume that the panel reviewing your application will have any prior knowledge of Playcentre, or understand what makes it different and special. Include specific information about your centre like how long it has existed, what links it has with the wider community etc.
- Who will benefit from this money? Your members? Wider community? Māori whānau? Specific ethnic groups or ages? All of the above?

## What do you want the money for?

- What do you want to buy or do?
- Why do you need the money?

- What steps has your centre already taken to fundraise for this project?
- What will your centre contribute towards the project? (e.g. payment in kind in volunteer hours; 50 percent of the cost; venue for a community event or workshop related to your project)
- What will be the impact if your centre is unable to get funding?

## When do you need it?

- What will be the timeframe for the project?
- Any project milestones – make sure these align with the timeframe the grant is meant to cover and that you will have time to complete an accountability report at the end.

## Why do you need it?

- How will this project add value to your centre either in terms of a change to the physical

environment, ability to purchase resources; opportunity to replace or repair broken and unusable equipment etc.

## A final thought...

Funders will be looking for justification that they should give your organisation money over other applicants, so you need to sell your idea as passionately and enthusiastically as possible. Make it sound convincing. Think about whether it would look good as a news story in the local newspaper or (if it's a bigger project) on the TV news. If it would, this can often help your application to be successful.

**Hannah Coleman**  
Mangere Bridge Playcentre

# Nailing the application process

Join the Facebook group 'Playcentre Grants and Fundraising'. A place to share ideas, inspire others, and support grants officers across Aotearoa.

Keep an eye out locally for any funding workshops for community organisations. Local councils often host workshops that offer a crash course in grant applications.

For local Board or Council grants in particular, it pays to form relationships with your elected officials so that your centre is on their radar. If you can take a group of children to present your ideas to the panel this can leave a really positive impression on them. Make sure that you maintain a relationship with your elected officials and Council staff all year round, and not just when you want money!

Check the closing date. Check the closing date. Check the closing date.

If at all possible, aim to submit your application before the due date. Leaving it to the last few days gives you no wriggle room for last-minute delays; either at your end (sick child) or theirs (when an overloaded online site repeatedly crashes).

The key ingredient to a successful application is keeping it clear, concise and focused on your purpose.

Check the requirements of the funder carefully and make sure you comply – some need a resolution to apply for funding or minutes from a meeting, others need multiple quotes. All applications are different. Make sure you read them carefully and understand what is needed.

Look at the previous recipients. This will give you an idea of the sort of projects that the organisation likes to fund.

If you've seen another Playcentre successfully receive funding for a project, don't be shy about asking them for hints and tips about their successful application.

You can apply for more than one grant at a time. The worst thing that would happen is that you'd get both and need to go back to one of the funders and explain you've received funds from elsewhere.

Make sure you highlight all the relationships your centre has with other local community groups and networks. Does another group use your centre? Do you host community events or hire the centre out for birthday parties? When you start thinking about it, your project may benefit a much wider cross section of the community than you first realised and clearly articulating this will help increase your chances of being successful.

Pick up the phone! Ring the organisation that you're thinking of applying to if needed. You can touch base, double check application deadlines and find out if what you are applying for is something they will consider.

Most, if not all, organisations are looking to give funding to meaningful projects that benefit the greater good. Make a point of those benefits in your application.

Before you hit send on your application, have a fresh pair of eyes look over it. You've probably been staring at it for so long, it's starting to blur. New eyes might pick up that stray error.

Proofread the numbers too. Have a financial whizz, or someone not afraid of numbers, to check the figures and budget you're including. It might seem obvious, but keep a copy of your application. It will make it easier next time you apply.

Don't forget about the accountability reports! You may need to prove you've spent the money on what you said you would, and give a brief on how the grant benefited your Centre. Late submissions of accountability reports could mean you miss out next time.

You may need to prove that the amount of time and effort that you budgeted for 'in-kind' has actually been contributed. A volunteer log – recording who provided the volunteer time, the type of work they did, when, and for how long – can be helpful for this. Photographs of volunteers doing the work also helps.

Remember to say thanks. It can be a nice touch to have the tamariki craft a card or write a letter to say thank you to the funder. Photos are an added bonus! Tag the funder in a Facebook post and share the love.

If your application is unsuccessful contact the organisation and ask for feedback. Most will be happy to give you an idea why you were unsuccessful. Ask them if there is anything you can do to improve your application for next time.

## Ready to apply? Can you answer these questions?

### 1. Who are you?

Yes – proceed to next question  
No – do some more thinking

### 2. What do you want to do?

Yes – proceed to next question  
No – do some more thinking

### 3. Why do you want to do it?

Yes – proceed to next question  
No – do some more thinking

### 4. What do you expect to achieve?

Yes – proceed to next question  
No – do some more thinking

### 5. How much will it cost?

Yes – proceed to next question  
No – do some more thinking

### 6. How much do you want from whom?

Yes – proceed to next question  
No – do some more thinking

### 7. How much (and what) will you contribute yourself?

Yes – proceed to next question  
No – do some more thinking

### 8. How long will it take and when will you need to start?

Yes – **APPLY**  
No – do some more thinking

# Supporting our Pasifika learners

A new resource for kaiako of Pasifika learners has been launched by the Ministry of Education. *Tapasā: Cultural Competencies Framework for Teachers of Pacific Learners* was developed through consultation with Pacific teachers, academics, experts, families and communities. It is a tool that can be used to increase the capability of all kaiako, from early childhood to secondary school.

## What does 'Tapasā' mean?

Tapasā is a Samoan term, that can be loosely translated as a navigation compass. It can also be referred to as a guide on a journey. Tapasā the resource serves a dual purpose – as a guide for kaiako to navigate their own journey of becoming more culturally competent, and as a symbol of the learning pathway that Pasifika learners can undertake.

## How is Tapasā organised?

It is written around three turu, or competencies, that form the basis of a framework.

### Turu 1: Identities, languages and cultures:

Demonstrate awareness of the diverse and ethnic-specific identities, languages and cultures of Pacific learners.

### Turu 2: Collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviour:

Establishes and maintains collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviours that enhance learning and wellbeing for Pacific learners.

### Turu 3: Effective pedagogies for Pacific learners:

Implements pedagogical approaches that are effective for Pacific learners. Within each of these turu, progressive indicators describe competencies that should be evident within different stages in the career of a kaiako. It is linked to both the *Standards for the Teaching Profession* and *Tātaiako*.

## Getting started with Tapasā

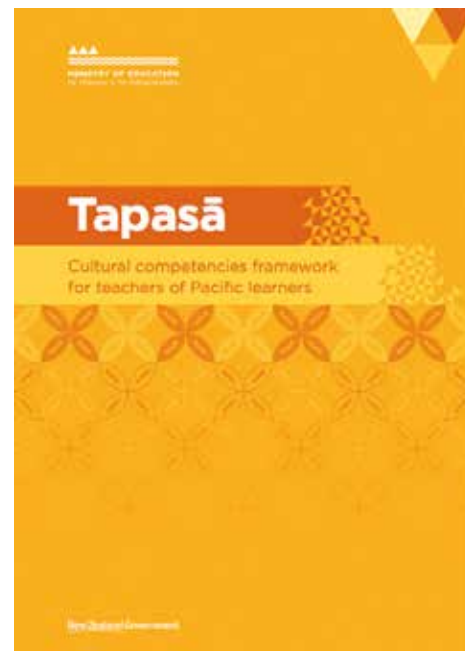
The turu of Tapasā could be explored through an internal evaluation to strengthen the understanding, skills and knowledge of kaiako when teaching Pasifika learners. There are guiding stories and case studies to support kaiako in developing their practice. The Education Council website will shortly feature resources and professional learning opportunities to help kaiako integrate Tapasā.

## What next?

The Education Council will lead the implementation of Tapasā. A group of expert teachers and leaders will be formed and will collaborate with the council to:

- consider what might be needed to make a cohesive suite of professional learning resources to give life to Tapasā
- develop strategies for socialising the framework in a way that is engaging, meaningful and digestible
- look at how Tapasā can be embedded into *Our Code*, *Our Standards*, and inform teaching practice and appraisal processes.

Hard copies of Tapasā should have been received by all Playcentres. Additional copies can be ordered through *Down the Back of the Chair*. Digital copies can be downloaded from the Te Kete Ipurangi website.





# Introducing Ruth Jones – Trustee



Kia ora koutou katoa.

My husband Brendon and I have six kids – AJ, Faith, Toby, Matt, Jonathan, and Nathaniel (ages 8-19 years) who have all been solely Playcentre kids. With unexpected twins in the mix, our Playcentre whānau was a saving grace and support network. We have learnt so much through Playcentre that has shaped our family, bettered our parenting and given us answers when so much seemed unknown. Last August marked 17 years as a Playcentre family, we started our journey at Hataitai Playcentre in Wellington, then to Newlands-Tamariki Playcentre (Wellington) as our family grew, then to Wallaceville Playcentre in the Hutt. I love how all our children have been welcomed in the door of whatever was our current centre, whether it was “their” centre or not. We have been a part of the Wallaceville Playcentre whānau for 9 years. I am honoured to be a centre life member, as well as being a Hutt Association life member, after being heavily involved since just after we arrived in the Hutt Valley.

I have been honoured to be the kaiwhakahaere for Te Whare Tikanga Māori. It has had moments of really challenging me on a personal level as well as an awesome learning opportunity. It has been a privilege to support our partner’s mahi, which I believe has strengthened my skills to serve Playcentre as a whole organisation, not just Tāngata Tiriti house.

Last year I was Hutt Association’s co-president. This coupled with my experience on our school Board of Trustees has helped me solidify that governance is where my heart and passion lie. It is where I am at my best. I believe that governance is about stewardship, kaitiaki, guardianship – and so although I have a vision for Playcentre I know that my role as a trustee is to

## How has Playcentre changed you?

Wouldn’t be here, wouldn’t have survived parenting, without Playcentre – the village and community it has given me, the knowledge I have gained (about myself and children), the fun I have had but mostly the support! Finding like minded souls from across the country was a god send! I have visceral memories from my first Hutt Association meeting, and my first national meeting, a feeling of coming home “oh! THIS is where my people are!” Playcentre has been life changing for me, my children, and even my husband who rarely comes to Centre – that stuff rubs off!

It has become part of my pepeha, and it’s not lightly that I say “Ko Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi o Aotearoa toku ukaipō”.

serve the organisation, our centres, our communities.

I am super excited to be on the Trustee Board because I believe that Playcentre is the best start for New Zealand’s whānau, and our communities. I want Playcentre to be a validated and viable option for ALL families, for generations to come, with equity of funding, or better. I believe that our philosophy and values, our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi are the strong bedrock on which we stand, they are what set us apart, and they are what will see us thrive.

I am excited to be working towards making our organisation a better space for Māori and Pākehā truly working in partnership, as envisioned under the Tiriti o Waitangi and proposed by our own treaty audit – “a relationship of tino rangatiratanga and kāwanatanga, where one party is not subordinate to the other”.

With my children at school, and beyond, I have time to give to this role. It is time I give gladly, humbly, to honour those who gave their time and passion to Playcentre before me.

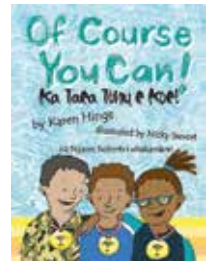
## RĀRANGI PUKAPUKA – BOOK LIST: LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning support, previously known as special education, refers to the additional support some tamariki need to engage and achieve in education. While by no means exhaustive, this list offers a few suggestions of pukapuka you might like to add to your library.

### *Of Course You Can/Ka Taea Tonu e Koe*

by Karen Hinge, Nicky Sievert, Ngaere Roberts

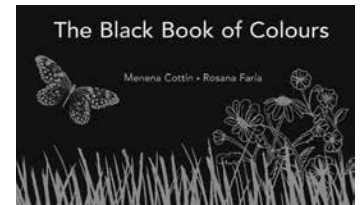
Jeremy is starting a new school and is a bit nervous. However, his classmates are welcoming and help him take part in almost everything. Featuring a child in a wheelchair, however it is not apparent to the reader initially that he uses one, nor is the word 'wheelchair' mentioned in the story. Bilingual story with both English and te reo Māori on the same page.



### *The Black Book of Colours*

by Menena Cottin

Our eyes tell us about colour. But what if you are blind? Can you still know colours? This incredibly unique book shows you how to 'see' without your eyes. Braille accompanies the illustrations on every page and a full Braille alphabet offers sighted readers help in deciphering the text with their fingers, and sharing an experience usually known by blind readers alone.



### *A Boy and a Jaguar*

by Alan Rabinowitz

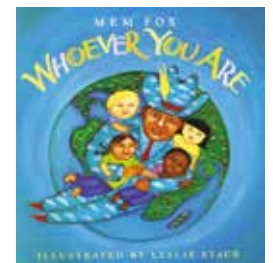
Alan loves animals, but zoos make him sad. He wants to be their champion – their voice – but he stutters uncontrollably. Except for when he talks to animals. Based on a true story, exploring truths not defined by the spoken word.



### *Whoever You Are*

by Mem Fox

Children everywhere laugh, cry, play, eat, and sleep. They may not look the same, speak the same language, and their lives may be quite different. But inside, they're all alike. A book urging us to accept our differences, recognise our similarities, and – most importantly – rejoice in both.



### *We're All Wonders*

by R J Palacio

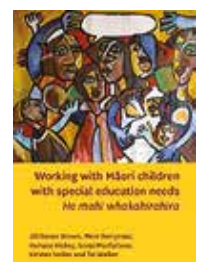
The story of August Pullman, an ordinary boy with an extraordinary face. *We're All Wonders* shows readers what it's like to live in Auggie's world – a world in which he feels like any other kid, but he's not always seen that way.



### **For kaiako:** *Working with Māori Children with Special Education Needs*

by Jill Bevan-Brown, Mere Berryman, Huhana Hickey, Sonja Macfarlane, Kirsten Smiler and Tai Walker

This book provides essential information for those striving to provide culturally responsive, effective education for Māori children. It explores the key components of culturally responsive, evidence-based, special education practice; it describes holistic and inclusive responses to educating all tamariki, especially those with identified special education needs; and it discusses a paradigm for Māori disability identity—whānau hauā.



**Other ideas:** *Rex's Specs* by Jack Hughes, *El Deafo* by Cece Bell, *Isaac And His Amazing Asperger Superpower* by Melanie Walsh, *We'll Paint The Octopus Red* by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen, *Benny Doesn't Like To Be Hugged* by Zetta Elliott, *My Friend Isabelle* by Elize Woloson, *The Seeing Stick* by Jane Yolen.

# Book reviews

## Kia Ora: You Can Be A Kiwi Too

by June Pitman-Hayes

Māori lyrics by Ngaere Roberts

Singer-songwriter June Pitman-Hayes excels once again with this enchanting new waiata for Kiwi tamariki – and anyone new to our shores.

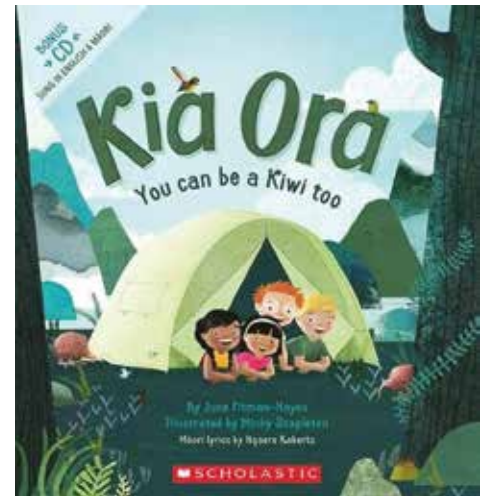
This beautiful book is a simple celebration of community, welcoming with open arms and learning from others.

Ngaere Roberts translated the song into te reo Māori. It is refreshing to have both languages within the same book.

Illustrator Minky Stapleton combines simple illustrations with rich detail. Children and adults of all nationalities feature within the pictures, as do some of our more well-known tourist attractions.

A CD featuring Pitman-Hayes singing the song in both language, while accompanied by a ukulele, is also included.

A gorgeous book and song for the tamariki and whānau of Aotearoa, with a universal message. Diversity, community, respect and caring for each other are at its heart.



## Little Hector and the Big Blue Whale

by Ruth Paul

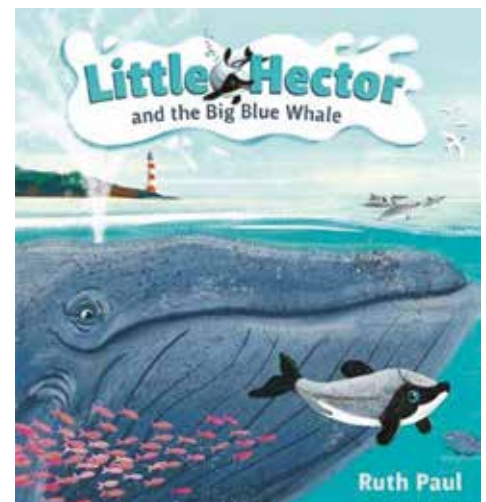
A small but daring dolphin, Little Hector swims out into the deep blue ocean. He meets many dangers – and an unlikely friend – and proves you are never too small to have big adventures.

Award-winning picture book creator Ruth Paul returns with this new series about New Zealand's Hector's dolphins that is both informative and entertaining. She had a big reputation to follow, her book *I am Jellyfish* won best picture book at the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults this year.

*Little Hector* was the perfect follow up – we had great fun spotting characters familiar from *I Am Jellyfish* and her illustrations are both whimsical and accurate. Each page is a visual delight – with the text becoming part of the picture at times.

Tamariki not only get to meet Hector and his friends, but they will learn how we can help protect our precious natural environment and its inhabitants.

The inside back cover full of Hector's dolphins facts will inspire plenty of rich learning conversations. A cute wee book with a powerful message about our precious taonga.



## Bonkers about Beetles

by Owen Davey

From the mighty Goliath beetle to the beautiful iridescent scarab beetle, this captivating and stunningly illustrated guide will teach you everything you need to know about these fascinating insects.

Davey illustrates the beetles in a dramatic geometric, yet accurate, style. It is a book that should not be tucked away on a shelf, but placed out for all to see. It begs to be picked up.

Life cycles, metamorphism, anatomy, biology and behaviour of beetles are all laid out in this reference book.

A wonderful page shows the beetles life-sized, while another highlights the flight and flash patterns of fireflies. Yet another shows the weird and wonderful, giving readers an invitation to explore the giraffe weevil and the violin beetle, among others.

It is a great first reference book for those budding scientists, while adults will marvel at the illustrations and witty informational tidbits hiding within.

With a tough hardcover, timeless stunning illustrations and plenty to learn, it will delight even the most squeamish of readers.



# TLC for your Centre

The Christmas break is the perfect time to host a working bee and get your Centre looking fresh for the coming year. Playcentre Awareness Week is traditionally held early in the new year for this reason.

Clean windows inside and out. Wipe down sills.

Weed gardens, remove thistles, cut back any overgrown shrubs or trees.

Clear out each resource area. Wash storage and shelves. Repair or replace any damaged resources. Reorganise and restock area.

Wash down exterior of building, including eaves, gutters and spouting.

Wash tables, chairs and high chairs.

Fill in any potholes on driveway areas.

Paint walls and roofs if needed.

Dig woodchips over to keep soft and good.

Deep clean carpet and lino/vinyl if necessary.

Check bikes and trikes. Tighten any loose nuts, bolts or screws. CRC joints and inflate tyres if necessary.

Arrange a caretaker to care for the fish and pot plants over the break.

Water-blast concrete areas to remove moss and dirt  
**Tip:** care must be taken when using a water blast on timber decks. Don't use a blaster to clean down painted areas as it can remove paint and force unwanted water into cracks and holes.

Wash dress ups, puppets, linen, dolls' clothes, and couch covers.

Check, clean and repair any shade sails.

If wooden building blocks need a clean, soak in a solution of washing soda crystals and water, give them a gentle scrub then dip into white vinegar. Rinse with water and leave to dry.  
**Tip:** Regular oiling can make them sticky so only oil when the wood is very dry.

Clean out kitchen cupboards, fridge and oven. Defrost freezer.  
**Tip:** don't forget to check food expiry dates and dispose of out of date items.

Rake/turn over sandpit. Top up with more sand if needed. Check, clean and repair sandpit cover if needed.

## Safety First

- Keep yourself and equipment away from overhead power lines.
- Make sure you have a firm, even base for ladders to sit on.
- Refer to your Centre's health and safety policy and the Centre list of identified hazards. If in doubt, ask.
- Leave the expert work to the experts.

## Handy Tips

- A new property portal has been added to OneDrive – accessible through Office365 using your Playcentre.org.nz email.
- Work closely with your regional property administrator. They have a lot of valuable knowledge and information to help you – and keep checking your property portal OneDrive folder for information sheets.