

Playcentre Journal



*Welcome to
our Village*



ISSUE 159

Summer / Raumati 2019

Playcentre camp – Schema – Fire and ice
– Self-care and wellbeing



This year dawns with fresh promise. We will finally begin to the amalgamation come into fruition and the reality of this new era of Playcentre will become clearer. As we near the change in qualifications required to keep our village running, Centres across the country will need to adapt in order to survive. This Christmas just gone, my eldest turned five. Sometime this year she will – probably – start primary school. Just as a new era dawns for Playcentre, a new era dawns in our whānau.

As excitement builds over starting school, there are moments when her new reality hits home. Fear, uncertainty, anxiety. All valid emotions for a concept she's never experienced before. Much

of which has been experienced by me, and other Playcentre kaiako I'm sure, as we navigate this change.

The lessons she is learning as she approaches this much-lauded time are relevant to all of us at Playcentre. Make connections. Learn about, and practice, self-care. Move towards your goals. Nurture a positive self-review. Keep things in perspective. When we encounter a roadblock on our journey, look at it as a stepping stone, an opportunity to try and discover something new. Here's to many new adventures in 2019.

Rebekah Lyell
Playcentre Journal
kaiwāwāhi matua



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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:

- Improving meetings
- Emergent leadership
- Documenting children's thinking
- Tapasā and Te Whatu Pōkeka in action

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Cover photo: Landsdowne Terrace Playcentre, Upper South region

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.

Future Villagers: Showcasing the resources of Playcentre through play.

This year, to celebrate Playcentre Awareness Week and to tie in with our new slogan 'Welcome to our Village', we created the Future Villagers campaign. This showcases our children at Playcentre and the incredible resources Playcentre offer.

Children at Playcentre will grow in confidence as they transfer their knowledge, skills and dispositions from one learning experience to another through endless activities and

interactions. Each child has the chance to find their voice and their strengths at Playcentre. The future of your child is in your hands: give them the gift of learning by encouraging them to build,

bake, create, dress-up, climb, paint, and sing. The future is wide open for families at Playcentre.



Future Artist

Emotions can be expressed and creativity can be nurtured using colours and textures of paint.

Painting provides an opportunity for children to develop an understanding of concepts such as colour, shape and size. Learning to hold pencils and crayons between the thumb and fingers helps children develop pre-writing skills.

Playcentre resources can include:

- Brushes of varying lengths, widths and density
- Paint Rollers
- Primary coloured paint
- Secondary coloured paint
- Fluro paint
- Metallic glitter paint
- Easels
- Paper with a variety of shapes and colours ie. newsprint, cartridge paper, plastic, different textures
- Large pieces of paper to allow large arm movement
- Other surfaces like cardboard cartons, walls or fences
- Sponge patterned rollers to allow for textures
- A variety of natural materials to paint with ie. Cotton buds
- Paint holders
- Aprons
- Display board or wall to display the children's paintings and murals



Future Builder

When children use tools to create, they learn to plan, reflect and problem solve.

Children can use real tools to accomplish a task they set themselves. This encourages them to learn how to cope with unexpected challenges.

Playcentre resources can include:

- Carpentry Table
- Wood such as pine and other soft timbers in a range of sizes
- Small sized adult hammers
- Saws – could include panel, tenon and coping saws.
- Screwdriver
- Drill
- Pliers
- Bench vice
- Nails – assorted sizes up to 75mm.
- sanding block
- set square, ruler
- carpenter's pencil
- Saw bench



Future Horticulturist

Growing plants can be fascinating. Children are given the opportunity to watch and nurture plants as they grow.

Having hands-on experiences with natural resources encourages children to develop their own theories about how things work. Exploring the natural world helps them to appreciate the sounds, textures, tastes and smells from Papatūānuku (Mother Earth) and to understand their place in the environment.

Playcentre resources can include:

- A selection of natural materials like shells, bark, sponges, stones, leaves, flowers, plants, branches, logs, driftwood, moss, lichen, rocks, sticks, pine cones, seedlings, feathers and flax.
- A vegetable or herb garden
 - An aquarium, pot plants, worm farm or compost bin
 - Magnifying glasses
 - Insect box
 - Magnifying bug jar
 - A selection of reference books that describe the forces around us – wind, rain, fire, energy, power and machines.

A New Chapter

Late last year Playcentre whānau from across the country came together for a weekend, to celebrate the 71st Conference of the New Zealand Playcentre Federation. Co-president for Tāngata Tiriti Susan Bailey reflected on the year that was 2018, while also announcing she would be stepping down from her role.

2018 has been another big year in the Playcentre book. A year of transitions, both internal and external of Playcentre.

Since our conference last year, the operational structure has been further imbedded, and following this conference, the second part of the legal process to amalgamate the whole of Playcentre will take place. This means the constitution we agreed to in 2016 will become THE constitution for our organisation, Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi, Playcentre Aotearoa. This conference will be the last meeting where Playcentre Associations are the members of our organisation. This conference is the first conference under the new operational structure, from the operational budget, which is of course funded by your centres, from the child funded hours we receive.

Now as we step into the next phase of this process, we will continue to further develop and imbed the governance processes we've been developing; like succession plans and emergent leadership, along with AGM and Hui representation.

The theme for this year's conference is Kohu Auwahi | Blue Smoke – a song which was written in 1940, by Private Ruru Karaitiana, from the 28th New Zealand (Māori) Battalion, and in 1949 was the first commercial record to be entirely recorded and produced this country. It is through this we acknowledge the pioneers of our organisation and their contribution to the Playcentre movement around the same time.

As we come together this weekend, to deliberate on the future for Playcentre Aotearoa, we can stand on the shoulders of those who came before us and be confident, as they were, that Playcentre will survive. We can reflect on their words – like these, from 1988, when Sue Stover, Editor of *Good Clean Fun* and an Association life member wrote:

"...And where does Playcentre have its heart? At the centres – in the sandpit, at the water trough, on the climbing frame... this is where the philosophy of Playcentre interacts with hundreds of communities all over New

Zealand. It is where Playcentre comes to life."

I have reflected at length this year, on Playcentre, where my energy has been, where my heart is, and where it always will be. I've reflected on what I value, as a woman, a wife, a mother, a volunteer. As with other life transitions, there comes a time when priorities change and decisions need to be made. My decision to stand down as co-president is just that – I am leaving this role. This Playcentre chapter of my life is complete; it's time for a new chapter. But how does one leave Playcentre? What is this thing we call 'Playcentre'? Is it a place? Is it a building? 'Playcentre' itself is intangible – it is the philosophy, it is the values and principles we hold in our hearts, and, as the well-known whakatauki says – He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata: What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people.

Who is Playcentre? We are Playcentre – the centre members, the parents, the children, the employees, the volunteers.

So, as we continue to play and grow together, in Playcentre, emerging new leaders, in our centres, in our communities, in our organisation, and in families throughout New Zealand, we ask you, the movers and shakers – our members – to remember what we can do with the gifts we have, our principles and values, our compassion, respect, integrity, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and māramatanga. These will help us all work together for a successful future for Playcentre Aotearoa, for the children and the adults in the sandpit.

The conference began a review of the current strategic plan 2014-2019 and this will begin our strategic conversation to build the next strategic plan. Our Centre and Rōpū Māori members will always be at the heart of what we do and measuring their experience ensures that we work to be, what Lex Gray called, the best 'folk movement'.

Remember, you, the members of Playcentre, will be the decision makers, the governors. You will set the direction for future members of Playcentre, as



our past members, our tuakana, our elders, have done for us. You are here to represent the voices of our members. You have listened to the conversations during the year, at meetings, in the sandpit and some at one of our national hui. Remember those conversations and trust that what you hold in your kete will contribute to the decision making. Trust your selves, your inner voice, and know that those you represent trust you and want you to represent their voices too. That's what being part of this co-operative, of Playcentre, is about. We don't always know what the outcomes will be because we often have different experiences and expectations. What we do know is that we are all here because of the same thing; because we believe in 'Whānau Tupu Ngātahi – Families Growing Together' and we can trust that we all come with the best intentions, for the whole of Playcentre.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takimano: My strength is not that of an individual but that of the collective

New Zealand Playcentre Federation, 71st conference, Wellington, November 2018.



Our Playcentre taonga

Ahakoā he iti, he pounamu

As the whakatauki says “although small, it is a treasure”

This pounamu was gifted to the Tāngata Tiriti Trustees at conference 2013 by members of Tāngata Tiriti House.

The Trustee Board is currently made up of six members. Such a small number of our overall membership – 450 centres and their members, Centre life members, Association life members, Federation life members and the newly formed Friends of Playcentre! A small number of our overall members, but as guardians of Playcentre philosophy our Trustees

play a vital role.

This taonga comes to every Trustee board meeting and national meetings to remind us that our work is for you; our centre members. That every decision should come back to what is best for us all. In between meetings a Trustee takes him home, so that reminder is there still with us. He sits on my desk so I can mirimiri (rub) or talk to him as I do my Playcentre mahi.

Ruth Jones



He Tokotoko – Te Rākau

At Playcentre Federation conference in 2008, Ngāti Whātua kaumatua Cyril Talbot gifted Playcentre He Tokotoko, to support us in our mahi at that conference and beyond. Marion Pilkington, the then President of NZPF, accepted this taonga and in her report to the next conference, she wrote:

“During the conference I had the pleasure of meeting Cyril Talbot, Kaumatua from Ngāti Whātua. Cyril was present when the first Playcentre opened in Auckland at the Orākei Marae. At the closing of conference on the Sunday Cyril honoured Playcentre by gifting us with a tokotoko once owned by a chief of Ngāti Whātua. This gift was given to help us in our mahi over the next year as we consider the future direction of the organisation and develop our strategic plan.

Normal Māori process would have meant that the tokotoko would be returned to Ngāti Whātua at conference in 2009; unfortunately with the death of Cyril Talbot during the year we were not sure of the process. After approaching Matt Maihi from Orākei Marae about the return of the tokotoko we were informed that the family would like to leave this taonga with Playcentre for as long as we continue our work. If at any time the NZPF ceased this work, they knew the tokotoko would find its way



back to the marae and Cyril Talbot’s whanau. I would like to thank Cyril’s whanau for this gift which will always have a place of honour at the top table at national meetings attended by the Federation President”.

Marion knew this was not only significant for Playcentre – it became significant for her too.

It took a while for Te Rākau to settle in to Playcentre life and getting ‘him’ to national meetings wasn’t always a simple process. Let’s just say he would be at all national meetings, but

he didn’t always travel with the co-president...

Over the years, he has become a true taonga for the co-presidents and the Trustee Board, attending all Trustee Board meetings as well as Playcentre national meetings and hui. In recent years, the Trustees have shared the care of Te Rākau, who has affectionately become known as ‘the old man’. He has come to represent our partnership and has (physically) supported the co-presidents – particularly on this journey. More on that another day.

For information on Playcentre Aotearoa’s other taonga

Issue 150 Autumn 2015 has information about te mauri stone Kōhatu, gifted by Piri Galbraith and her whānau. The story behind the Kahu Huruwhuru mō ngā tamariki (children’s feathered cloak) woven by Paia Swanson is also included in that edition. Issue 149 Autumn 2014 has information about E Tipu E Rea – a mōteatea for Playcentre – written by Whaea Raina Ferris.

'Start where your feet are'

Place based learning or place based education is an educational philosophy where kaiako plan for learning that is connected to local stories, landmarks, history and language. Respected Māori academic professor Wally Penetito, Ngāti Hauā, gives a message to kaiako to "start where your feet are, start by learning about what you can see and work out from there, start with the stories or pepeha that belong to that place".

At Lynmore Playcentre we decided to give place based learning a try after we identified a need to more effectively enhance all children's understanding of Māori language and culture and strengthen pride and identity for Māori mokopuna.

How did we start?

We started by looking down at our feet and across our lake, Rotorua, and knew we had to start by exploring and teaching around a well-known Te Arawa love story about Hinemoa and Tūtānekai. This story tells a tale of two lovers who go against the wants of the elders in their plan to meet up. Hinemoa swims from her home in Owkata across Lake Rotorua to Mokoia Island where her lover Tūtānekai waits playing his flute to guide her. When she arrives she is cold and warms up in a thermal pool on the lake edge. Tūtānekai finds her here and they are married and are the tupuna of many people in our community.

We began by telling the story to our tamariki in various ways. We encouraged and supported role play, art, sandpit play, exploration, waiata and dance around the story and its characters.

We empowered our members to bring their ideas for planning to centre and to run or lead activities they felt would strengthen the learning for our tamariki.



What happened and what did we do?

We organised a trip to share our story with another early childhood education service.

We were welcomed onto Owkata Marae to experience where Hinemoa lived.

Playcentre whānau travelled to Mokoia Island to experience the distance Hinemoa swam and to dip our feet into the warm water of Hinemoa's pool.

We visited the shores of Lake Rotorua to experiment with flotation devices like the ones Hinemoa used to aid her swim.

Our tamariki made their own flutes on session.

Our tamariki retold and illustrated their own version of the story.

What were the outcomes?

The real benefits and outcomes – so far – for our tamariki have included:

- Increased use and confidence in the use of te reo by retelling the story through waiata, art and role play.
- Connecting learning to real experiences; our tamariki paddled their feet in the warmth of the pool that Hinemoa warmed up in, feeling the exact heat she would have felt.
- Confidence to share their pepeha in a marae.
- Interest in learning a pepeha to share.
- Conversations around culture and language.
- Pride in sharing their stories, knowledge and waiata with others.
- Ability to identify culturally significant



local landmarks such as Mokoia Island and Hinemoa's rock, thereby making connections between people, places and things in their world.

- Experiencing being a part of the process of a pōwhiri on the marae.
- Joy in playing, imagining, inventing and experimenting with the story as a theme.

Why was it so successful?

Our tamariki became so engaged in the story because it felt like their story, like they owned it because it was from their place, a story about things they could see, feel and connect with.

Every time I drive towards the lake and my children catch a glimpse of Mokoia Island across the shimmering water, I hear a chorus of "there is Mokoia Mum, wow that was a long way for Hinemoa to swim".

Our Centre whānau relished the new learning and the feeling of connectedness to our local land and to the local people that developed from this place based learning plan. We realised that this was just the beginning of our story, that Tūtānekai and Hinemoa were our guides, giving us the strength and confidence to continue our journey of discovery into the histories, stories and tikanga of our land.

Lucy Sheppard

References:

Te Kete Ipurangi. (2018). *Place-based Education*. Retrieved from <http://maorihistory.tki.org.nz/en/programme-design/place-based-education/>

Kaitiakitanga

Protecting a space for the next generation involves an interweaving of relationships for the benefit of all. The Guardians of Rawhiti Domain Group were looking to create a nature play space within the Rawhiti Domain. They wanted to consult with local families to see what could be included in the space.

Enter Amy Passant, co-ordinator at Shirley and South Brighton Playcentres, with her passion for letting families experience the many benefits that come from nature play. Early last year three Playcentres – Shirley, South Brighton and North Beach – met with Maria Romero from Butterfly Musketeers to experience the play space and learn about the butterflies that overwinter there.

“The children spent three and a half hours exploring”, Amy said about their first visit. “They used the woodland area for hiding and making huts. Pinecones became marshmallows for their campfire. The circle in the middle became their campsite.” The natural components of logs, cones, hills and hollows provided a rich play environment where children could use their imaginations beyond what a standardised playground in primary colours would have achieved.

The Guardians, led by Ruthie Emeny, shared their plans with the Playcentres and further consultation and rethinking of the design followed. This included adding signage with action verbs like ‘hide, climb, play’ which provided children and their caregivers some ideas for using the natural space.

At the next gathering in August, Playcentre was joined by the Māori Immersion class from Rawhiti School. The new sign was unveiled, and tamariki assisted Department of Conservation rangers with planting native grasses and bushes on the site. Sarah Cooper of Christchurch City Council and Jo Hayes, National MP for Christchurch East, were also in attendance to mark the occasion.

Since this, Christchurch City Council has planted flowering cherries, walnut trees, totara and almonds. The next step, Amy says, is “developing accessible paths through the woodland and clearing scrub to encourage more exploration and play, as funding allows”.

Amy is hopeful that other Playcentres will grasp hold of opportunities to be involved in planning for the future



of their local communities. Here in Christchurch, opportunities are in the pipeline for developing a nature play space at Broadpark (Waimairi Beach) and at the Ponds (Bottle Lake Forest).

Stephanie Wood



It takes a village

The school holidays loom. While many brave the swimming pools and cinemas, we at Landsdowne Terrace Playcentre pack up our children, bikes, and toboggans, and head off for a four-day adventure in the hills.

Only coming in for food, stories and the occasional nap, children spent the whole time outside and getting into the forest, climbing over big logs, lighting fires, roasting marshmallows and sharpening sticks for an eel fishing trip. Much of the play was centred on roaming freely and there were few toys or planned activities.

Big school kid Will, 6, enthused, "It was AWESOME. We biked down a 50 metre hill and we toasted marshmallows and it was fabulous and my friends shared their pocket knives with me so we could make spears to spear eels." Will's mother Rosemary agreed, "I love the community created on camp – the freedom, independence, the safety it gives our kids and the support for the adults." Another parent, Kirstin, expressed how lovely it was for the kids to have independence in a safe and caring environment.

The idea of camp was brought from Hamilton by returning member Colette Maier, who has organised four camps in two years. Apart from the fun

and friendships, she loves seeing the children playing freely outside. There is also "amazing support to help with supervising children, and the adult time in the evenings builds relationships, especially with new families".

It was certainly a lovely and inexpensive way to pass the school

holidays, while being able to share the care for the children, cooking and dishes. One parent, Nathalie, also noted how much relationship building happened at camp. "I love how easy parenting becomes when done with a village. Kids happily playing, adults chatting, chores are shared and everyone helps out. And you get some time in the evenings when the little ones are in bed to have a conversation and even finish it." Another parent, Justine, noted that it was completely tech free for adults and children both, something that was "never missed as the children relish each other's company and require minimal parenting input."

Held at Glenroy Lodge in South Canterbury, the camp was close enough to the Mt Hutt ski fields to entice a few families up the mountain for a family ski day-trip. The expansive grounds were the ideal environment for fearless older children who would try out the flying fox, while the younger children were delighted with the rather antique merry go round. An enormous waterslide attracted children of all ages

Continued on page 10...



who, with a little bit of help of some dishwashing liquid and a well-placed push from the top, might have stayed all day. However the main attraction was simply a hill, the perfect level of steepness for hurtling down by toboggan or bike.

Children of all ages were delighted to be at Playcentre in adventure mode. Spencer, 5, said "I didn't like Playcentre camp, I LOVED IT!", and Max, 6, declared that the next camp should last for all two weeks of the school holidays.

I asked my own children what they like best about camp and they are minimalistic in their answers. "Frisbee" said Gabe. When I pushed for details he sighed, exasperated, "PLAYING. Just PLAYING, Mum!"

Jesse, 4, said, "Dinosaurs", his answer now to just about anything. With some probing as to whether camp has dinosaurs or not, he relented. "Well, actually, I like beds."

The beds are bunk beds and so an adventure in itself. With enough bedrooms for each family to have private space, the families with babies or fast booking skills get the rooms with the soundproofing and ensuites.

I had decided I like our room in the old concrete block however, after a chat brushing teeth in the shared bathroom, two 7 year old girls, Summer and Maddy, shared with me their devious plan for their sleepover that night, to have a midnight feast.

"But don't tell my mum."

Joanna Kuta



Interested in trying out a Playcentre Camp? Here's what you need to consider:

- Book well in advance. Places that are affordable and can take large groups (usually Christian camps) are booked up sometimes a year in advance.
- Agree to pay the deposit as a centre – this will almost certainly be repaid by the families attending but shouldn't be on individual organisers to take on from the start.
- Design a simple meal plan (including dietary requirements) and make a spreadsheet to calculate how much food you'll need to buy.
- Distribute the work of the shopping for and transporting of food. You can arrange a cooking/cleaning roster but usually everyone pitches in without one.
- Communicate to families what to expect and what to bring – pillows, towels and bedding are usually required. Be ready for outdoor adventures – togs, bikes, torches, penknives, frisbees and fishing rods can provide endless entertainment. You might need games, books and puzzles for rainy days. Campfire-making and marshmallow-toasting equipment is essential.

Looking back to move forward: Licensing and qualifications

Suzanne Manning has recently completed a PhD analysing the impact on Playcentre of early childhood policy from the last thirty years. This is the first in a series of articles, sharing some of that history and analysis. The next article will look at the changing status of infants and toddlers at Playcentre. If you have questions about this article, or would like Suzanne to answer a particular historical question about Playcentre, you are welcome to send your questions and comments to the Journal Editor via journal@playcentre.org.nz.

Transitioning to new qualifications means that Playcentre has to re-negotiate the licensing rules with the Ministry of Education. This is the third time we have had to do this! Why does this happen? The simple answer is so that we can keep our philosophy of having parents as supervisors in our centres.

In the 1980s, the Playcentre Federation set the standards for Playcentres, in terms of equipment, property, curriculum and qualifications. At that time it was ideal, but not necessary, for someone with a supervisor's certificate to be running the sessions, along with an assistant supervisor, and parent helpers. Each Playcentre Association was responsible for the content and delivery of their own certificate programmes, and they varied hugely. The policy *Before Five* in 1989 changed this scenario drastically.

From 1990, all early childhood services had to be licensed, and the standards were the same for all services – kindergartens, childcare, Kohanga Reo, Playcentres. The standards were set out in a purple folder (variously called the 'purple peril' or the 'purple people eater'). Except for the qualifications standards; they were more difficult to standardise across different services.

The first proposal was that all services, even Playcentres, would have a supervisor on session who held the Diploma of Teaching (ECE). This was a new qualification that had been approved in 1987, offered through Colleges of Education and Universities. The NZPF in 1989 called this "quite inappropriate" and "unrealistic and undesirable" for Playcentres. Barbara Chapman, then NZPF President, wrote in the *Playcentre Journal* that "we need to reach an understanding with the new Ministry of Education that empowering people means recognising the value of parents too, as the providers

of education... Playcentres felt it important that their parent supervision methods and field-based training would be recognised and acceptable in future".

Playcentre training and parent supervision was indeed recognised in the first licensing agreement with the Ministry, encapsulated in what was known as the Qualifications Blueprint 1990. This set a level of 120 qualification 'points' to be held by people on session in order to receive funding. The points system was originally developed to cross-credit older training into the new Diploma of Teaching. In this system, the diploma was worth 120 points, and services with "limited parental involvement in sessions" would need to have head teachers with a diploma or equivalent. For Playcentres, it was agreed that 40 points (later upped to 60 points) would be assigned on the basis of "extensive parental involvement" and ongoing parental involvement, and the rest would come from parents with differing levels of Playcentre training.

Playcentre education underwent huge changes in the 1990s. With the NZPF commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the *Before Five* policy changes, the curriculum had to be updated with new content alongside the traditional child development, group work and leadership. The overall training was divided into 'parts', each worth a certain amount of points, to satisfy the conditions of the new licensing and funding agreement. The curriculum was standardised to some extent, and updated again in the mid-1990s.

The NZPF Education Sub-Committee became Playcentre Education, a registered Private Training Establishment, and this required having a quality management system and a level of monitoring never experienced before. The mid-1990s was when the first Training Coordinator was employed, as it became obvious that



the knowledge and time commitment required for meeting all the new regulations was way too much for a volunteer role.

By the end of the 1990s, the points system for the wider early childhood sector was a mess. There were more exceptions than there were rules! The Ministry made the decision to abolish the points system and work with complete qualifications instead. The NZPF was concerned that this decision would impact on the licensing agreement. Candy Smith, NZPF President in 1999, wrote in the *Playcentre Journal* about the bid to have Playcentre's different forms of group supervision retained. This involved

creating a new qualification – the Playcentre Diploma in Early Childhood and Adult Education – and negotiating a new licensing agreement based on this qualification. The new curriculum was approved by the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA) in 2000, and the new licensing agreement in 2001. To differentiate from the older curriculum, 'parts' and 'points' terminology was replaced with 'courses'.

This arrangement was unchallenged for a few years. Then in 2008, the NZQA embarked upon a review of all sub-degree qualifications (levels 2-6). These had proliferated to such an extent that it was fiendish to administer, and difficult for students and employers to tell the difference between them. It was decided that the system would be more like NCEA, so that no matter what place you studied at, the end qualification would be the same. The early childhood qualifications were reviewed between 2013 and 2016, and the number and content of the qualifications was set by NZQA. Any other early childhood qualification below level 7 could no longer be offered (after a transition period).

For Playcentre, this means the end of Playcentre-specific qualifications. From now, the qualifications offered will be the NZ generic ones, albeit delivered in a unique, Playcentre style. On the plus side, this means the qualifications will be fully recognised outside of Playcentre, something that was a goal in the debates both in 1990 and again in 2000. It also means that the licensing agreement of 2001, based on the old qualification, has had to be re-negotiated again.

The new licensing and funding system for Playcentre combines Ministry requirements of having a suitably qualified 'person responsible' named on the licence, and Playcentre philosophy requirements such as working as a supervisory team rather than an individual, a significant number of centre parents undertaking some training, and the adult:children ratios set by Playcentre. The language has changed again, too, to differentiate from the earlier education programmes. We now have 'awards' – not courses, parts or points.

Playcentre has never stayed static for long. As an organisation we have adapted to changing political, social and cultural conditions, and this continual adaptation is the reason



Playcentre has survived and thrived for over 70 years. Adult education is a key factor in Playcentre philosophy, every bit as important as the children's education. Let's make the most of the opportunities we have now!

References:

- Barbara Chapman, "Needs of Children First," *Playcentre Journal* 76 (1989): 8
Candy Smith, "Licensing for Playcentres", *Playcentre Journal* 105 (1999): 15

Supervision requirements for standard funding



FROM NOW UNTIL THE END OF 2020

OPTIONS

| | |
|-----|--|
| 01* | |
| 02* | |
| 03* | |
| 04* | |
| 05* | |
| 06* | |
| 07* | |
| 08* | |



FROM 2021

OPTIONS

| | |
|----|--|
| 01 | |
| 02 | |

Key

- Level 7 or above** - ECE teaching qualification approved by the Teaching Council
- Level 6** - A gazetted Level 6 qualification
- C6** - The Playcentre Diploma in Early Childhood and Adult Education
- Level 5** - A gazetted Level 5 qualification
- C5** - Course 5 of C6 (Playcentre in Context)
- C4** - Course 4 of C6 (Playcentre Practice)
- Level 4** - A gazetted Level 4 qualification
- PEA** - Playcentre Educator Award
- PIA** - Playcentre Introductory Award
- C3** - Course 3 of C6 (Playcentre Sessions)
- C2** - Course 2 of C6 (The Playcentre Way)
- C1** - Course 1 of C6 (Introducing Playcentre)

* Until 31 December 2020, Course 1 and the PIA are interchangeable in these combinations, as are Course 2 and PEA

Schemas 101

You may have noticed some tamariki focused on repeating a particular activity or theme in their play, and thought, what is going on? Why are they tying things up all the time? Or why do they always need to carry things from one place to another? Why do they like hiding and burrowing? And most frustratingly, why are they always throwing things, or smashing things? Joanna Dowle explores an important aspect of children's development, schema.

Children often repeat actions over and over, testing something out and thereby learning about their world. By repeating things again – whether it is dropping objects from a table, or singing a song again and again – they are exploring ideas. They also explore them through talking, drawing, and constructing of these themes, seeking to find a pattern and building cognitive structures in their brains. Such repeating patterns in children's play are called schemas. More precisely, a schema *"is a thread of thought which is demonstrated by repeated actions and*

patterns in children's play or art".

It is worth being able to recognise schemas – they are a source of some amazing learning and development in children, but can also cause frustration in adults. Understanding schemas can help adults to better respond to children's behavior, both by extending the learning that is happening and also managing some of the more disruptive effects of schemas.

Schemas can be a great way of thinking about patterns of behaviour you may observe. So how do we spot them? You need to look for a pattern





of related activities, occurring across a period of time (could be days, weeks, or longer). This may occur not only in children's play, but also appear in their mark making, and feature in their language. Three additional behaviours that help in spotting schemas are *involvement* (intense concentration, being absorbed, enjoyment), *flow* (being deeply engaged and immersed), and *persistence* (almost being obsessed). If you can spot all three behaviours around some repeated patterns of play, you're probably looking at a schema.

Some common schemas that you may observe are:

- **Transporting** – moving things from place to place, often using bags or vehicles
- **Trajectory** – a fascination with

movement, often explored through throwing of objects

- **Enveloping** – covering things completely, or enjoying being covered or hidden
- **Enclosing** – surrounding things by building fences or walls
- **Positioning or ordering** – arranging things a certain way or in a pattern, lining things up
- **Connecting** – joining, sticking or tying things together
- **Disconnecting** – knocking things down or smashing things
- **Rotation and circularity** – a fascination with spinning, rolling, twisting, and rotation

Schemas can often occur in clusters or groups, and schemas can also overlap. Enveloping and enclosing can often be found together; a focus on connecting can go hand in hand with

disconnecting. Good observations, taking photographs, sharing information with parents and others, maintaining a child's portfolio are all good ways for spotting schemas. It's important to note that the list above is not exhaustive. If you identify a pattern that doesn't seem to quite fit any of these, create your own!

As children learn through their schematic fascinations, their play and thinking becomes more complex. This usually follows the sequence:

- Motor actions or sensor-motor learning
- Mark making or symbolic representation
- Abstract thought level

First, mokopuna explore their schema using their senses and their bodies. A child with the rotation schema may become absorbed with making the



wheels spin on toy cars. They may then explore their schema through art, mark-making and construction. The child fascinated with rotation and circularity may do endless drawings of circles or spirals. Finally, their fascination may evolve to considering and exploring more complex and abstract features of rotation, for example discussing what happens to the fishing line when the reel is wound?

So how do we support our mokopuna on this learning journey? By understanding the underlying schema, kaiako can best cater to their learning needs. The child who loves Lego – what is his actual focus? Does he love building structures (*connecting*)? Or lining the blocks up by size and colour (*ordering*)? Or using the blocks to build walls, cages

and pens (*enclosing*)? We need to accommodate the more compulsive aspects of schemas, provide variety and a range of appropriate activities, and extend children's interests. The chart (see pages 18-19) provides some ideas for activities to support the main schema types. We can also deliberately use language to enhance children's understanding of their schemas, providing them with new vocabulary to describe their fascinations (spin, twirl, round, circle, spiral, dizzy, twist, rotation, whirl, orbit, roll, corkscrew).

Understanding the root of the observed compulsions does not mean we have to accept all schema-based behaviours. Some aspects of the child's exploration may be intolerable or socially unacceptable (the trajectory schema is often a problematic one).

Children's schema interests are very strong, and you will find it difficult to outright stop them. Re-direction works best: finding an activity – still within their area of interest – that is more acceptable. Instead of throwing blocks, why not try paper airplanes? Do keep trying if your first redirection idea doesn't grab their attention, this strategy does work well!

Schemas fit Te Whāriki really well. By identifying children's schemas, and supporting them to explore their fascinations and their own ideas, we are following the Te Whāriki principle of whakamana – empowerment. Schema interests span all dimensions of development (cognitive, physical, emotional, spiritual, and social and cultural), and are a part of kotahitanga – holistic development principle. Understanding schema allows us to make links between children's play at home and at Playcentre – a great example of the principle of whānau tangata – family and community. Finally, schema learning theory helps us to build ngā hononga – relationships with mokopuna. By understanding their underlying interests, we can set up activities that are engaging and fun for each child, and better manage any problematic behavior that may arise due to the drive to explore schemas.

The five strands of Te Whāriki are associated with learning dispositions such as curiosity, determination, persistence, and resilience. While dispositions are children's *attitudes to learning*, schemas focus on children's *inner-directed thoughts*. But catering to children's schemas is a wonderful way to enact the Te Whāriki strands. The ability to focus and maintain concentration are some of the indicators of mana atua – wellbeing, mana whenua – belonging can be seen in children's interest and pleasure in their mana aotūroa – exploration of their schema. Respecting children's focused interests allows them to become confident in their own special strengths, to learn new skills, and to refine working theories – all evidence of mana tangata – contribution. Schema also influence children's language and mana reo – communication; not surprising that tamariki would want to learn schema-pertinent words and language!

Some schemas are easy to spot, others may not fit any of the common 'labels.' In the end it doesn't matter.



The key is being flexible and observing our children, and looking beneath the surface (especially if children are using resources in an unexpected or unintended way) to find the underlying fascination. Look for ways to talk to them about their schema. Ask them questions about their passions. Give

them language to describe their interests and provide new challenges to extend their learning. In doing so, you will build warm reciprocal and responsive relationships with the tamariki, manage their behaviour, and encourage their cognitive development.

Further reading


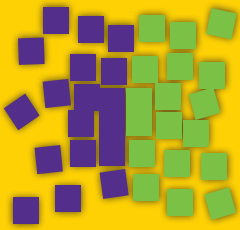









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Internet links

https://mthornhill.weebly.com/uploads/6/3/4/0/63404993/loose_parts_by_schema_2017.pdf

<http://www.teakoranga.org.nz/common/schemas.php>

<http://www.nature-play.co.uk/blog/schemas-in-childrens-play>

| Schema: | | Behaviours children may engage in: | How parents might perceive |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Connecting |  | Joining train tracks, clicking Lego blocks together, tying things together. | "Everything is tied up in knots tangled!" |
| Disconnecting/ Deconstructing and scattering |  | Knocking towers down (dynamic disconnecting), dismantling (a more thorough and thoughtful deconstruction). Cutting with scissors, cutting clay or playdough into small pieces. Smashing ice or sand castles. Scattering or tipping out items. | "He destroys everything!" |
| Trajectory/ dynamic vertical/ dynamic horizontal motion |  | Pushing, kicking, dropping objects. Throwing things. Running back and forth, or jumping up and down. | "She's constantly throwing things!" "He keeps jumping off the furniture!" |
| Rotation and Circularity |  | Spinning and twisting, rolling themselves or objects. A fascination with wheels and other rotating objects. | "He's constantly turning the top on and off and fiddling with the knobs on the stereo!" |
| Transporting |  | Picking things up, moving them, dumping them down, using prams or baskets, wheelbarrows, bags to move things around. | "Nothing is ever where it belongs!" |
| Enclosing (2D), Enveloping (3D), Containing |  | Surrounding or covering things completely. Getting into boxes or hiding. Burying things. Building fences or walls around objects. Drawing borders around their artwork. Filling containers or putting one thing in another. | "Can't find anything, it's always hidden away in random holes and drawers!" |
| Going through or around a boundary |  | Posting things, exploring holes, tunnels and doors, putting fingers in holes. | "She keeps poking things and making holes!" |
| Ordering/ Positioning |  | Lining things up, arranging and ordering things according to a pattern, categorising things. | "He gets so upset if things aren't exactly in order!" |
| Orientation/ Perspective |  | Hanging upside down, laying down on the floor to look up at something, climbing up to get a better look, looking through things. | "She's always moving and won't sit still!" |
| Transforming |  | Mixing things, paint and colour mixing, painting self. | "Everything is a mess!" |
| Sound |  | Banging, shaking, jiggling, rattling objects, singing. | "He is making so much noise!" |

| ive it: | Activities to support the schema: | Toys children may like: |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| s and | Thread beads, make paper chains, junk construction, build tracks or roads, do some carpentry, connect up some electronic circuits, make a puzzle, make a human train by holding hands. | Train sets, Lego, Mobilo, string, sellotape, jigsaw puzzles, Meccano, Knex, snap together beads, Velcro hair rollers, magnets, Brain Box electronics, tow trucks. |
| | Pull apart Lego or Mobilo pieces, get child to help with putting away toys like train tracks, dismantle a jigsaw puzzle, disassemble an old piece of equipment (e.g., telephone), break butter into flour during baking, saw pieces of wood during carpentry, knock down sand castles, smash ice, play in a ball pool. | Train tracks, magnetic trains, scatter sticks, playdough to pull apart. |
| ings!" | Make paper airplanes, throw wet sponges/balls/bean bags at a target, use yo-yos, blow feathers, chiffon scarves or tissue paper, chase and catch bubbles, spin and twirl ribbons, make a pulley system, fly a kite, make baking soda and vinegar rockets, play with running water, make art by dripping paint onto paper, play on swings and slides, blow bubbles, launch cars off ramps, play with balloons | Hot Wheels cars, marble run, Frisbees, rockets, parachute men, wind up toys, ride on toys, bikes, skittles, swingball |
| aps he | Poi, make windmills, play with kaleidoscopes, explore spirals (snail shells, coils, springs), set up mixing and stirring activities, use a salad spinner to paint pictures, use water wheels, play with cogs, play spinning games like ring-a-ring-o-rosy, twirl ribbons, use spanners and screwdrivers, do roly pollies on a grass hill, mark making on a turn table, use pottery wheel. | Spinning tops, kaleidoscopes, spinning tire swings, twing, merry-go-rounds, spirograph, toy cement mixer, rolling pins, globes, hula hoops, swingball |
| ings!" | Use diggers, tractors, wheelbarrows in the garden and sandpit to transport sand, bark, pebbles, other natural objects, treasure hunt with a bucket to collect things, provide a collection of bags and purses, let them help with setting out equipment, watering plants (transporting water), | Vehicles like dump trucks or cars with trailers, shopping trolleys, prams, wagons, wheelbarrows, backpacks, handbags, tool aprons. |
| ys s and | Create a den or fort, bring large cardboard boxes to hide in, set up tunnels, play parachute games, use shoe boxes to create homes for small toys, create burrows and tunnels in wet sand and playdough, have bandages and scarves for wrapping, wrap presents or items for pass the parcel, face paint, play peek a boo, provide lots of containers, bury treasure, swing on a barrel swing. | Dress ups, belts and bracelets. Nesting toys, Russian dolls, sleeping bags, tents, shape sorting toys. |
| d | Threading activities, pouring water or sand through spouts, funnels, colander and sieve, sewing | Marble run, train set with tunnels, mailbox, piggy bank, maze toys |
| e not | Provide lots of objects for sorting, collage material for gluing, toy cars, blocks, fairy gardens | Wooden peg board |
| on't | Provide climbing frames or bars, opportunities to roll, tumble, climb, twist, spin, try to do hand/headstands, make peep holes in boxes, look at mirrors, and through microscopes, binoculars, kaleidoscopes, | Stilts, rocking horse, jungle gym, microscope, telescope, binoculars, periscope, kaleidoscope. |
| | Cooking and baking, making potions, melting ice, putting on costumes, masks and wigs, dressing and undressing dolls, painting dolls then bathing them, planting seeds and watching the plants grow | Mr Potato Head, thermal reactive toys, dress ups |
| !" | Waiata, waiata-a-ringā, poi, nature sounds, nature sound walks, make rainsticks, tīfī tōrea. | Musical instruments, rainstick, percussion toys from around the world, Boowhackers, noisemakers. |

FIRE

Ideas for fire

- **Candles** – melted crayon drawings, extinguish candles with a jar, fire-proof balloons (add water to a balloon and hold over a candle. Compare that to a balloon filled with air).
- **Cooking** – marshmallows, damper bread, bananas and chocolate in tinfoil
- **Bonfires**
- **Smoke volcanoes** – place two tubes at right angles, build up sand like a volcano, remove pipes carefully, insert fuel into middle, light fire from side tube.
- Different methods to construct a fire

Safety considerations

- Check with Fire and Emergency NZ and your Council. You may need a permit, or fires may be prohibited in your area.
- Check the latest weather and wind speed and direction.
- Make sure smoke from the fire will not be a nuisance to your neighbours or affect visibility for road or air traffic.
- Ensure fire is more than three metres away from buildings, hedges, shelter belts or anything that can burn. 'Damp down' a three metre area under and around the fire to prevent spreading.
- Have a way to put out your fire when you are finished, if it gets out-of-control, or if any embers or burning material escapes. This could include a hose, water sprayer, a shovel and dirt or a mechanical digger. These must be within easy reach.
- Don't light your fire if you have any doubts that it is safe.
- Ensure someone stays with the fire until it's put out. Consider a 'no go zone' to keep children safe.
- Tie back long hair, wear shoes.

Learning

- Sate natural curiosity about fire
- Ignite imaginations
- Wellbeing – mana atua: keeping themselves and others safe from harm
- Risk-taking and risk analysis
- Communication
- Empowerment – whakamana
- Cause and effect
- Belonging – mana whenua: showing respect for kaupapa, rules and the rights of others

Extension ideas

- Dramatic play around firefighters or dragons
- Mahuika and Rūaumoko
- Fire and Emergency visit to Centre
- Volcanoes, comets and space
- Make pirate treasure maps with burned edges
- Matariki and other cultural traditions around fire
- Hāngī, umu and lovo



ICE

Ideas for ice

- Grab some hammers, saws and other tools.
- Add salt
- Add colour – either freeze coloured water, or use pipettes or brushes to add paint or dye.
- Magnifying glasses and the sun
- Provide jugs of water of varying temperatures
- Smash! Appeal to those in the trajectory schema and drop the ice from a height.
- Observe, explore the changing states of matter

Safety considerations

- Eye and ear protection if using tools with ice.
- Ensure mokopuna give each other space.
- Provide appropriate surfaces to play on – ice and water can get slippery
- High levels of supervision required – like carpentry.
- How will you make play both safe and accessible to younger mokopuna?

Learning

- Exploration – mana aotūroa: making sense of the natural and material worlds. Force and friction, cause and effect.
- Hand eye coordination, fine and gross motor skills
- Safety with tools
- Communication
- Interacting with others – turn taking, co-operation
- Problem solving
- Crash and bash – destructive play
- Risk analysis
- Sensory exploration
- Persistence and perseverance

Extension ideas

- Ice chalk
- Freeze vinegar or coloured water
- Add things to water and ice – plastic toys, flowers, sequins etc
- Freeze different shapes and sizes – balloons, ice molds, ice wreaths with frozen flowers to hang from branches
- Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere and Tāwhiri-mātea
- Explore the seasons
- Make ice cream on session



Thinking ethically:

Even our youngest mokopuna can give consent. Be attuned to body language and communication styles. Ask the child if it is OK to take their photograph.

Support mokopuna to understand their right to say no, and to respect the rights of others to say no too.

Involve the child in recording observations. Engaging mokopuna in analysing and interpreting the information includes their perspective and contributes to its authenticity.

Model consent within your Centre.

Ensure photographs are necessary, non-intrusive and only used for their intended purposes.

Be mindful of aspects like safety, fatigue, feelings of inclusion and exclusion, cultural differences.

Consider the reaction a child may have looking back at the photo as they grow older.



Informed consent: photography

Every Playcentre session, kaiako observe, record conversations and take photographs of mokopuna for analysis and reflection. We use these recordings to guide our curriculum decisions, and inform our understanding of the child as a learner. While steps are certainly taken to ensure the privacy of our mokopuna, how often is their perspective considered? Ethical tensions can arise for Playcentre kaiako, as we record observations of our mokopuna.

PRIVACY

Within Aotearoa, the Privacy Act (1993) controls how 'agencies' collect, use, disclose, store and give access to personal information. Almost every person or organisation that holds personal information is an 'agency', including early childhood education services. Personal information is any information that can identify you as an individual – including your name, picture, or record of your opinion or views. Principles 10 and 11 of the Privacy Act put limits on the use and disclosure of personal information. The starting point for Playcentre is that we "must look after their students' information and not release that information to third parties unless they have been given clear permission to do so" (Dalziel, 2009). Education services need to make their purposes for collecting personal information clear when they collect information. "Schools should be open and transparent about how they intend to use student information, and this should also apply to photos or any other type of recording" (Dalziel, 2009).

A MATTER OF RIGHTS

The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1998) states that children should be involved, informed, consulted and heard, and that their rights, feelings and interest be given as much consideration as those of adults. Just like adults, mokopuna have the right to understand what is going to



ography and ethics



happen, what is expected of them, and how the information is to be used. They have the right to protect their own privacy, and to choose when, how, and where they will participate.

OUR CODE, OUR STANDARDS

The Education Council's Our Code, Our Standards sets out values that define, inspire and guide us as kaiako. The Code applies to all certificated teachers and those who have been granted a Limited Authority to Teach, in every role and teaching context. While it does not 'apply' to every Playcentre kaiako, it is a set of aspirations for professional behaviour and can help us navigate the complex ethical dilemmas and professional tensions we face every day. The values that underpin Our Code, Our Standards include manaakitanga; "creating a welcoming, caring and creative learning environment that treats everyone with respect and dignity" and pono; "showing integrity by acting in ways that are fair, honest, ethical and just".

OUR CURRICULUM

Te Whāriki is the framework we use to shape our approach to early learning. Smith (2007) states that in Te Whāriki children are "valued as active learners who choose, plan and challenge". The principle of empowerment – whakamana underpins the document and urges kaiako to recognise and enhance the mana of the child. "To learn and develop to their potential, children must be respected and valued. This means recognising their rights to have their wellbeing promoted and be protected from harm" (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 18). The strands of wellbeing – mana atua, belonging – mana whenua, and communication – mana reo can all be used as a lens in which to challenge our thinking.

All kaiako need to be vigilant in the protection and respect of children's rights. Seeking consent should be embedded in our everyday practice.

Privacy Commission (2014) privacy principles:

Only collect information you need.

Where possible, get it direct from the person.

Be clear about what the information will be used for.

Use fair and reasonable ways of collecting information.

Keep information safe.

Let people access information about themselves.

Correct information if the person thinks it is wrong.

Make sure the information is accurate before you use it.

Only keep information as long as you need it.

Only use the information for the purpose you collected it.

Only share personal information if you have a good reason.

Only use identifiers if it is clearly allowed.

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Get Smart: Learning Stories Go Digital

Portfolios are often a treasured record of our child's time at Playcentre. Filled with photos, artwork, and written observations, they give great enjoyment and pride for both tamariki and their whānau. Otumoetai Playcentre member Jodie Moore explores the use of digital apps to aid kaiako in assessment.

In addition to the value learning portfolios hold for whānau, the Ministry of Education requires early childhood centres to use 'assessment' as well as planning and evaluation to inform its programmes. Learning stories are often used as a way to record and assess the learning we observe on session and can result in a rich and insightful record; especially when considered as part of a child's portfolio. Margaret Carr, co-author of the original *Te Whāriki* (2007), is widely credited as the leading creator of learning stories. Carr advocates an approach to writing stories which focuses on learning dispositions and highlighting tamariki strengths and interests. At Playcentre this 'assessment' becomes a collective responsibility among member whānau. At times, it can seem like a task at the bottom of the already too long 'to-do' list. However, in recent times the emergence of free or low-cost apps has provided a platform for writing learning stories, and other forms of assessment, which are both easy to use and potentially time-saving.

Project Life, Canva and, my personal preference, PicCollage are especially useful. These apps allow multiple photos to be uploaded straight from your phone's photo gallery (no more searching for cables and plugging in cameras to laptops). They can also provide numerous backgrounds, fonts, colours, borders and additional images. The multiple options are easy to access and can be selected quickly. Text can be typed directly into the template selected and extracts from *Te Whāriki* copied and pasted from the pdf copy available online. Adjustments and amendments can be made easily allowing for multiple revisions to be made when you have the time to do so. The resulting document is often visually appealing. When completed, saving to your photo gallery or Dropbox, emailing, uploading and printing can also be achieved with a minimum of fuss. Whilst the aforementioned apps are free, the more prolific writer may enjoy the wider variety provided by the in-app purchases (mostly around \$3-5) but this is by no means necessary.

An unexpected consequence of my own use of PicCollage has been the significant increase in the number of learning stories I write. This is a trend I have observed centre-wide. Whilst there are clearly advantages to this, one might also need to consider the printing costs for those using paper portfolios. Alternatively, centres may see benefits in creating online portfolios and uploading these documents. Centre policies relating to the use and distribution of photos should be considered.

For more ideas, the 'Playcentre Portfolio Enthusiasts' Facebook page can be a great source of inspiration for both hand-written and electronically produced learning stories, shared to the page by generous members.

Tips for getting started:

- Choose one app and explore before moving on to another.
- Embrace a trial and error approach. The great thing about digital assessment is it can be deleted or altered in a flash.
- Back up your work! Consider creating a cloud based account that all Centre members can access and upload to.
- Share your knowledge and your stories with other members. Consider purchasing a Centre tablet for your members to use so that access to the technology is available to all.
- Have fun!



Assessment – when parents are learners, too

At the heart of sociocultural learning and assessment is the clarity that learning happens in relationship with people, places and things. At the heart of formal sociocultural assessment is documentation that reflects values which are often unexpressed: what is worthy of documenting? Who documents, and in what circumstances? In the engaging with the documentation, what is documenter looking for? How does sociocultural assessment build capacity for all those involved? Valued learning is key here – but what happens when both the child and the adult are learners?

Wondering what all this might mean in contemporary Playcentre settings, we embarked on a research project which involved meeting in focus groups consisting of members active in seven Playcentres within two associations – one North Island; one South Island.

We wanted to learn more about how sociocultural assessment – especially learning stories – are understood and used in Playcentres. Although we did not set out to engage with any particular type of Playcentre, we were pleased to see that the seven who volunteered to participate included some that were group supervised, as well as educator-supervised. Participants came from both urban and

rural Playcentres; from small ones as well as large ones. We undertook our research in 2016, so the references to Te Whāriki in these learning stories are to the 1996 version – not to the 2017 version. (For a more detailed account of the research project, see Stover & deVocht, 2017.)

In this article, we are focusing on one of the basic assumptions about sociocultural assessment: that assessment happens in a context, that that context will be evident within the assessment, including the underlying values and beliefs held by those involved. We recognised that in Playcentre, sociocultural assessment is particularly dynamic because of the

ongoing process of engaging with new families. This means new children as learners but also new adult learners who have responsibilities to contribute to the learning community. We present our research findings here as provocations for discussion rather than definitive statements about Playcentres more generally.

In analysing the transcripts of our focus groups, we recognised two broad areas which reflect underlying values. The first area is within the learning stories themselves. We suggest that underlying values are evident in:

- what the learning stories focus on,
- who they are written for,





- how learning is recognised,
- how the learning story is used, and
- what, if any, analysis is written down as part of the documentation.

Underlying values also become evident when we consider:

- who is encouraged (and how are they encouraged) to produce a learning story,
- what (if any) feedback is given on what is written as a learning story;
- how writing and engaging with learning stories affect the culture of a Playcentre.

What valued learning is evident in learning stories?

In total, the focus groups considered more than 50 learning stories. These learnings were brought to the focus groups, and participants were encouraged to discuss their significance.

These learning stories were gifted to the researchers as part of the project. Working through these learning stories, we found that most were written 'to the child' – in other words, that the learning stories are often written conversationally – or as a 'letter' to the child. Grammatically, this has the author as 'I' and the child as 'You'. An example: 'When we arrived at Playcentre today, you told me you were going to get

some toys out'.

But there are learning stories that are written as a commentary about the child – with the author as 'I' and the child as 'he/she/they'. An example: 'She decided to run...'. Others are written from the child's perspective – a sort of 'ghost writing' with the child referred to as 'I'. An example: 'Today my mummy and daddy got married, it was such a lot of fun and a special day us all... I was making everyone smile and giggle at me.'

Some learning stories were written in storytelling form, such as: 'Ahoy there, Captain Yasi! Today you set off on a hunt for 'golden treasure' on the island. With your band of merry pirates you waves the flag and set sail across the seats. You succeeded to find a safe place to bury your treasure so the other pirates couldn't find it! The long swishy grass was perfect...'

And some are written in rhyme: 'SPLASH SUMMER DAY: Way hey we're having fun today / Having wet and splashy water play / Sliding down the slippery slide / All the water makes for a great ride / Time to go home, to say good bye / Mummies and Daddies will have lots of washing to dry!'

Several learning stories consist of a child's storytelling, as recorded by an adult: "Once upon a time, there was big bad wolf. And what did it eat? Fish. And

the Big Bad Wolf said, 'Yucky fish' and it dived into the water. A shark came...."

In our research, there was recognition that listening to learning stories can help encourage dispositions for learning, (such as 'confidence') as well as 'their character'. This can occur 'by listening to stories that other people have said about them and remembering things, building their memory and building imagination for things that they might want to revisit or through hearing about that story again.'

Several spoke about learning stories as documenting the story of each child's early life – something that may be of interest later on. Several participants saw the documentation as providing a memory bank about the early years. An example: "My child, when they're older, will be able to say look, as a three-year-old I worked really nicely in a group!"

Once learning stories are written up, what happens next varied. None of those Playcentres in our research were using any online assessment platforms in 2016. The participants reported that in some Playcentres, learning stories were displayed on the wall for a term, and then removed and put in portfolios.. In at least one Playcentre, children's portfolios were regularly brought out to encourage children to open them, to discuss, to remember.



One Playcentre with a 'story time' routine, regularly included portfolios as a source of stories to be read out loud. Interestingly, some learning stories were formatted so that analysis appeared on a separate page from the learning story, so that the learning story could be easily read out loud without the analysis.

We found that while the learning stories often had evidence of forward thinking ('What next?'), the focus groups indicated that planning for Playcentres was much more complex than following up on learning stories. One focus group decided that in their experience, learning stories were about transforming the learning story author; that observing a child and

writing a learning story – taking the author to new understandings of the child – which could impact immediately on planning, but equally could mean that the adult might have a new insight about how to be alongside the child. Informal discussions often happened. Insights – often tentative insights – were shared with the child's parent.

A participant mused that because so much of what happens at Playcentre is child-led, adults are not directing the learning: 'Like today for instance, the child came with an idea and they wanted to do that idea and it was feeding the birds and thankfully we had some bird feeding apparatus.' She explained that learning happens through 'full engagement' between

the child and the environment. Several participants pointed out that – prompted by a learning story, a Playcentre parent might set up an activity and find that the child is not interested. So adult intentional planning is only one component of the planning that occurs in a Playcentre environment.

In addition, there are pragmatic reasons why learning stories may not feed into intentional planning. One participant pointed out that there is often a delay in getting learning stories written up so their usefulness for immediate planning is often in conversation, rather than because someone read and acted on a learning story.

Nearly all learning stories had a graphic attached, sometimes a piece of children's artwork, but more usually a photograph or two. Photographs were described as adding value to learning stories. As one research participant said: "Photos aren't a necessity, but a great photo is amazing" Participants suggested that young children often found that the photographs were a meaningful prompt for remembering. Sometimes the memories were about what was happening in photo, but more often the children's strongest interests were about who was in the photo.

The normalising of photography on Playcentre session was commented on in one focus group where concerns were also raised about parents potentially being overly focused on photography and less interested in engaging meaningfully in what their child was doing. However, another participant suggested that photographs can substitute for effort on the part of the learning story author. A learning story could be "just a bit pretty as opposed to really giving much grunt". A strong learning story might combine both the aesthetic of the 'pretty' and the 'grunt' of author effort.

What was the valued learning that was evident in these learning stories?

Below are eight broad areas that we suggest indicates what was important for those writing the learning stories. The examples given are extracts from learning stories which we think illustrate the values underlying.

1 Documenting children's interests. In some cases, this was a discovery for the learning story author, but in many cases, it was reinforcing the value of a child's interest. In some learning

stories, this included hypothesising ('What do you think will happen? Why?) and sometimes making evident subject areas – such as maths, science and literacy. Examples: "Wow Cooper! You sure love the sandpit at Playcentre! You are the master of the digger, spades, trucks, trailers and rakes...", "Your family of elephants came to Playcentre again today and you wanted to give them a bath..."

2 Making connections. Often these were connections between the child and the Playcentre community and local environment. But connections were also made to the child's home and especially home culture, to distant family members, and to past experiences. Eg: "Mia – you told us about a friend who had a cicada wing. It was nice that you shared your world outside of Playcentre with us.", "I love how you bring your ideas of places you have visited into your play."

3 Affirming experiences at Playcentre. This was especially common for children who are relatively new at Playcentre or with whom the learning story authors are still developing a relationship. For example: "You filled the sandpit with water and jumped in the big sandy puddles... I've really enjoyed our sandpit fun today.", "Thomas, your communication is amazing. You knew what equipment you wanted and where you wanted to put it."

4 Naming and affirming capabilities and emotional states. For example: "He poured with excellent concentration and precision exactly to the mark...", "As we continued to look, I told you all how I actually didn't really like bugs and that they made me feel scared... 'Scared,' Rogan said copying my actions, pulling in his shoulders and quivering. 'Yes,' I said. 'Scared.'", "You are growing to be a kind and considerate girl."

5 Identifying learning dispositions and working theories For example: "You put a foot out and tested the water it seemed as though you were thinking, will I or won't I? ... I saw you stamp your foot. You had a determined look in your eye.", "We could not find any spiders... We decided perhaps they were at work for the day and they would come back to their web later

when we had all gone home."

6 Using te reo, as well as using whakatauki and identifying aspects of tikanga: "Owen – you made the most of the lovely weather on Ramere and went o whakahaere waho. I loved how you paused for a moment as the warm wind blew the leaves around you. A real taste of ngahuru." "Kai pai tātou mahi – next week we have another great extension using the big pipes.", "Mā whereo, mā pongo – ka oti ai te mahi / With red and black, the work will be complete'. Today it was time to take the blue mat back to the shed. Matthew, Higan, Jessica and Flyn helped me. It required co-ordination, strength, communication and teamwork to lift together and walk carefully so no one fell over."

7 Recognising aspects of Te Whāriki. For example, in response to a young toddler's tapping and sucking on rākau as part of titi toria, a Centre co-ordinator identified 'Communication Goal 4 – 'Children discover different ways to be creative and expressive' pointing out how the child was learning to keep a beat and growing in familiarity with the Playcentre's repertoire of songs and chants. In response to a child helping locate spoons for the outdoor kitchen, a new parent wrote: 'It was so lovely have you show me where things are'.

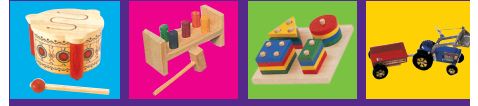
8 Making planning evident. For example: "Perhaps we could go on a spider hunt soon." "I think the best way to encourage you to write more ... is definitely to try and make some sort of game of it, like Mum did today."

Part Two of Lia and Sue's research will be published in the next edition of the *Playcentre Journal*. It will explore the underlying values that are evident in how adults engage with learning stories and will offer a challenge to Playcentre kaiako and whānau.

Lia deVocht and Sue Stover

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WHY SHOP ANYWHERE ELSE!

BIG

Some words are like plain bread.

Plain bread is fine, but if that were all we ever ate, we would miss sun-ripened apricots, the first summer grapes and impossibly juicy strawberries that streak our chins.

Some words are like plain bread, words like BIG.

BIG, BIG, BIG.

Perhaps we mean...

large,
giant,
enormous or
astronomical.

My loaf of bread is big. Okay, great. What if the loaf were...
as tall as a house,
as wide as an elephant
or as deep as the ocean?

My loaf is longer than my legs
and heavier than a sack of potatoes.
I can measure the loaf and tell you that it is a metre long and
weighs 12 kilograms. Then we really know how **BIG** it is.

Large, giant, enormous, astronomical, tall, wide, deep, long,
heavy, colossal, immense, tremendous, massive, hulking, mammoth,
capacious! Smell the colour! Feel the taste! Hear the impossibly
juicy words dripping out of your mouth!

Of course, some **BIG** people think that these words are too
BIG for children
(who learn at a ~~BIG~~ (an astounding) rate
and have a ~~BIG~~ (an inexhaustible) capacity
for language).
Little people, they say, need little
words, like...

BIG.

by Paula Salisbury
Dinsdale Playcentre



The importance of self-care

Self-care has been so commercialised that we often think of it as separate from our everyday life. Something that we need to purchase to reboot ourselves after a stressful period. Massages, holiday packages, mindfulness apps. But as Volunteering New Zealand chief executive Dr Katie Bruce argues, taking care of ourselves can be a radical practice in a world that places productivity over compassion and wellbeing.

It seems that half the internet is talking about burnout at the moment. Anne Peterson's article on *How Millennials Became the Burnout Generation* (2019) has struck a collective chord. It's that time of year where we take a 'break' – parenting exempt – and a new year sneaks up on us with its promises of resolutions, change and hope. Maybe we want more time for our own interests, maybe we have health or career goals, maybe we just want more sleep.

The Playcentre model itself is a form of self-care – sharing responsibility with other parents to create a village for

your children to grow and learn. With so much focus on individual parents and families meeting all the needs of their children, this model has an in-built support system.

Volunteering itself is also self-care because it is linked to individual health and wellbeing (James, 2018). There are even calls for doctors to prescribe volunteering to patients because the link is so strong (Cahalane, 2016).

But we have to be vigilant so that this collective model of care supports your own self-care rather than depleting it. As Playcentre parents and whānau you are teachers, fundraisers, accountants,



gardeners and much more besides. One of the key challenges in volunteer collectives is often how to better spread the load so that it's not always the same few people who take on the extra load.

Here are a couple of questions to ask yourselves at your local Playcentre:

- 1 Do we have clear expectations of each other as volunteers? Having really clear expectations really helps as people are often willing, but are reluctant to step forward if they are unsure of what is expected of them.
- 2 How are we going to support each other when we need to step back? For a culture that supports self-care it's a good idea to have this built into the planning so that people feel they are able to step back when they need to.

Taking action for your own wellbeing needs to be complemented by an organisational culture that supports and values its volunteers equally with its paid staff. This can mean a whole range of things from including the voices of volunteers when making decisions, training in volunteer management and an inclusive culture that supports new members to be inducted, get involved and spread the load.

Make the most of the resources that are already out there. You can find a best practice toolkit with useful resources including guidelines and a goal planner on Volunteering New Zealand's website (<https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/resources/best-practice-toolkit/>). You can also find ready to use resources on everything community on Community Hub so that you don't have to constantly reinvent the wheel (<https://community.net.nz/>).



Wellbeing at Playcentre

Utilising the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand's 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' toolkit can be good way for Centres to examine their culture of wellbeing. The Foundation created a checklist of five actions that are important for the wellbeing of individuals, whānau, communities and organisations. As a team, why not reflect on the following questions...

Give

tukua

- Is there a culture of good work being acknowledged and is appreciation expressed formally and informally?
- How do we support whānau with new babies? What about those going through difficult times?
- Do we foster emergent leadership?

CONNECT

me whakawhanaunga

- Is there respect?
- Are there systems in place for managing interpersonal conflicts?
- Do we know the name and stories of our iwi, hapu, maunga and awa of the place we live?
- Do we hold social nights to connect our whānau and foster a strong relationship?

KEEP LEARNING

me ako tonu

- Are training and education opportunities offered and encouraged?
- Are kaiako provided with opportunities to learn new skills?
- Do we know the languages of our whānau? E korero ki a koe Māori? Parlez-vous francais? Talar pu islensku?

TAKE NOTICE

me aro tonu

- Is our Centre a pleasant work environment?
- Do we begin meetings with a karakia (prayer) or short reflection (eg, an inspiring quote) followed by a brief silent period, allowing people to breathe mindfully and bring their full attention into the room.

BE ACTIVE

me kori tonu

- Are our people encouraged and able to move around safely?
- Are we inclusive of everyone?
- Are there opportunities to support people to exercise – for example, bike racks outside for whānau to bike to Centre?

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Sustainability officer 101

Sustainability is about meeting the needs of today without impacting on the needs of tomorrow. Many Playcentres already actively engage whānau in learning about their environment. A sustainability officer role can help guide Centres on this journey. The Playcentre Journal asked some seasoned officers for their best tips and tricks on how to make the most out of the role. First tip: photocopy these pages and pop it in your sustainability officer's folder!

Support other office holders in areas that might have a big impact on the environment. What is in the cleaning products we use? Is there a more environmentally-friendly alternative to this purchase? Do we really need to print that?

Research and develop ways to **incorporate the three aspects of environmental education** into the Centre's curriculum. These are: education **about** the environment (knowledge and care for the environment), education **in** the environment (hands on experience), education **for** the environment (informed action).

Work with the bicultural officer to research and **educate members and mokopuna about Māori concepts of the environment**. Kaitiakitanga, mana, tapu, mauri are good starting points. Learn stories about Papatūānuku, Tāne-mahuta, and Rongo-mā-Tāne (among many, many others). Issue 158 of the *Playcentre Journal* has a poster about bicultural approaches to sustainability.

Liase with and foster a **strong relationship** with local government bodies (District and Regional Councils) and other parties (DOC, Forest and Bird etc). They often have grants or other opportunities to support Centres in becoming more sustainable.

Encourage whānau and mokopuna to **investigate their local environment**, rather than imposing a particular set of values or practices.

Ask the mokopuna what they think! Give them a sense of ownership.

Develop educational material and **champion programmes** that will increase sustainable behaviours.

Provide **advice to inform** the development of policy, procedures, curriculum, and strategy, as required.

Join the Facebook group 'Playcentre – Environment & Sustainability' for support, advice and ideas. The group also has the link to a fantastic Playcentre Aotearoa publication (2012) called *A Resource Booklet of Environmental Learning Activities*.

Commit to actions that are realistic and that whānau are motivated about. Even just a small step is a step in the right direction.

Learn about and incorporate **celebrations of environmental awareness** into the Centre. Some ideas include Sea Week (early March), World

Environment Day (June 5), Matariki or Puaka (winter), Conservation Week (mid September) and Save Kiwi Month (October).

Visit other early childhood education services known for their exemplary sustainability practices.

Some practical ideas to a sustainable Centre

Make beeswax wraps (see issue 158 for a recipe!)

Sew wet bags for Centre members to take home nappies and wet clothing in

Look for alternative equipment – what could you use instead of glitter?

Compost and recycle at Centre

Edible gardening. Think garden to plate – what can you grow that you can also use for cooking experiences with mokopuna? Is there a local community garden you could donate excess produce to?

Provide natural resources in areas like collage, clay, playdough, the sandpit. Host an excursion to a beach or bush and collect resources, responsibly, as a Centre.

Become a kaitiaki for a local natural area (see page 8 for an example from a team of Canterbury Playcentres)

DOC's Kiwi Guardians programme has loads of ideas. Its website has plans for building a wētā motel, a lizard lounge, or a pest detector, among others.

Audit your water use, energy consumption, and rubbish.



Ngā Reo e Toru o Aotearoa – The Three Languages of New Zealand

Te reo Māori, New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) and English are taonga that belong to all of us. Māori, Pākehā, deaf or hearing, we can all learn these languages and share in their wonder with our children. I've written three board books for babies and little ones of first words in ngā reo e toru to empower whānau to start their journey of exploring our languages with our next generation. This series is called *Kōrero Mai – Speak to Me*. They are beautifully illustrated books grouped into three topics of *Animals*, *Family* and *Home*. The kupu/words are carefully chosen high frequency and high interest words to help you communicate with your baby before they can talk by using NZSL and give them a 'taste' of te reo Māori.

Mā te reo e mārama ai te iwi – Through language we understand.

Playcentre has been a part of my whānau life, in Taranaki and now Rotorua, for nearly 14 years with raising five girls with my husband, Eden. It has really helped form me as a parent and improved my primary school teaching no end. I now incorporate the philosophies that underpin Te Whāriki into my classroom teaching in so many ways thanks to the training I received through gaining my C3.

Playcentre has also brought some amazing people into my life. One of these gems of humanity challenged me upon the birth of my fourth daughter to use NZSL as a way to communicate with her before she could speak. I'm ashamed to say that I was dubious! But when I saw how quickly Hope picked it up, I became passionate about sharing this amazing skill with other parents.



I wanted to show them that it really is easy, just start with routine words like 'milk', 'nappy', 'bath', and 'bed' and then add in words that interest them – 'cat', 'dog', 'plane', or 'car' – and before you know it, you'll be having conversations with your little one. I've used te reo Māori with my children for years to a small degree, but I wanted to make this an embedded part of our parenting, so I started interchanging English with Māori when I signed with Hope. I was so excited that she understood all three languages.

Te mana o te reo – The power of language

This idea of creating these books evolved over time from my own experiences of exploring te reo Māori and NZSL with my own children. I wanted to find resources to support this kaupapa but to my shock there was nothing on the market. There were textbooks and courses, but nothing that was simple enough for a sleep deprived and time poor māmā to get started with. So I set to publishing my own book. Thankfully there seemed to be a desire from other whānau to share

our languages with their children and the books sold out quickly. This year, a publisher contacted me and wanted me to recreate the first book and write two more.

With help from the deaf community and a wonderful Te reo Māori consultant *Kōrero Mai – Speak to Me* came to life. I've also created a Facebook page and website to support whānau in using NZSL and te reo Māori with videos and tutorials, all for free at www.kiwisign.nz

Kōrerohia te reo, tohungia te reo – Speak the language, sign the language

There are so many benefits to expanding our children's language through learning more than one language; from brain development to relationship enhancement and an understanding of the diverse landscape of Aotearoa. It really doesn't need to be difficult, just one word at a time and you're making a difference. Aha koa ngā kupu iti, he timatanga – Though the words may be small, it's a start.

Jenny Chapman



RĀRANGI PUKAPUKA – BOOK LIST: RESILIENCE

We all face challenging times in our lives, it's how we turn our stumbling blocks into stepping stones that can help make a difference. Even our youngest mokopuna need encouragement to conquer challenges – whether it's rebuilding a broken tower or taking just one more step. When they've grown, they'll draw on that foundation of resilience for even bigger challenges. *Te Whāriki* even discusses resilience, stating learning and development is demonstrated when children have shown a “capacity for self-regulation and resilience in the face of challenges” (Ministry of Education, p. 27, 2017). Here are some pukapuka to start conversations about, and to model, the important disposition.

Flit the Fantail and the Flying Flop

by Kat Merewether

Flit is not allowed to fly. Warned by his parents to stay in the nest, he is bored. And hungry. A tasty looking mozzie lures him out of his nest. But a quick thud down to land and poor Flit realises he can't get back home. Flit must enlist the help of his friends to figure out a way to help get Flit safely back to his nest before Ma and Pa Fantail return home. A sweet story about resilience and friendship. Available in both English and te reo Māori.



The Tiny Seed

by Eric Carle

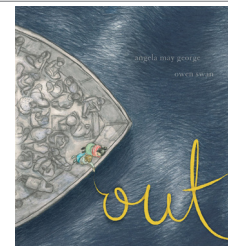
Even nature needs resilience. In autumn, a strong wind blows flower seeds high in the air. One by one, many of the seeds are lost – burned by the sun, fallen into the ocean, eaten by a bird. But some survive the long winter and sprout into plants, facing new dangers – trampled by playing children, picked as a gift for a friend. Soon only the tiniest seed remains.



Out

by Angela May George

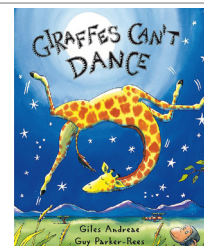
A little girl flees her homeland, making a long and treacherous boat journey with her mother to seek asylum in Australia. Starting a new life is challenging, but they work hard to create a new home. Told from the little girl's point of view, the story is both heartbreaking and triumphant, allowing timely and sensitive discussion of what drives people to become refugees and the challenges they face.



Giraffes Can't Dance

by Giles Andreae

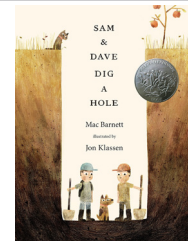
The touching tale of Gerald the giraffe, who wants nothing more than to dance. With crooked knees and thin legs, it's harder for a giraffe than you would think. Gerald is finally able to dance to his own tune when he gets some encouraging words from an unlikely friend. With light-footed rhymes and high-stepping illustrations, this tale is gentle inspiration for every child with dreams of greatness.



Sam and Dave Dig A Hole

by Mac Barnett

Sam and Dave are on a mission. A mission to find something spectacular. So they dig a hole. And they keep digging. And they find ... nothing. Yet the day turns out to be pretty spectacular after all. Hint: pay close attention to the very first, and very last, pages for a rare treasure. A witty story of looking for the extraordinary and finding it in a manner you'd never expect.



For kaiako: I'm Ok! Building Resilience Through Physical Play

by Jarrod Green

How do you allow for the physicality required to build resilience why you are tasked with children's safety? This guide provides tools and strategies for creating a culture of resilience while keeping safety front-of-mind. It examines common safety concerns, how to build trust with whānau, and gives practical approaches to working with tamariki to find their appropriate level of physical risk-taking. It is important to remember this book is not New Zealand based, so information included around licensing and liability may not be relevant.



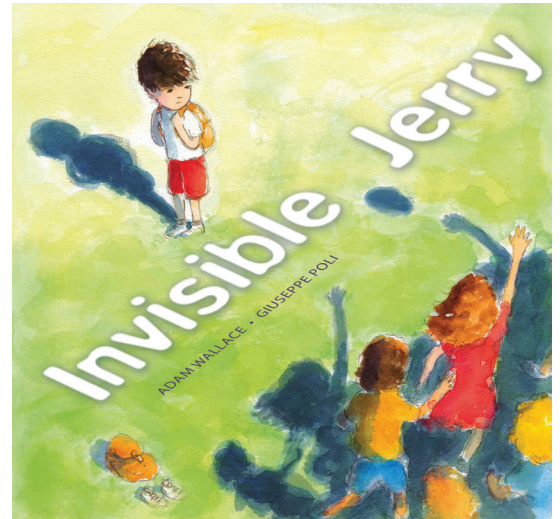
Other ideas: *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes, *A Chair for my Mother* by Vera B Williams, *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg, *The Paperbag Princess* by Robert Munsch, *Rosie Revere Engineer* by Andrea Beaty, *Beekle* by Dan Santat, *Manukura: The White Kiwi* by Joy Cowley.

Book reviews

Invisible Jerry

by Adam Wallace

People don't notice Jerry. If someone bumps into him, they don't say sorry. If someone waves, it's to somebody behind him. If he makes a joke, nobody laughs. He never gets picked last for sports teams, because he's never picked at all. It's like he's invisible. Until Molly comes along. Molly asks Jerry his opinion. She shares things with him. She laughs with him. She sees him. And it is then that Jerry realises he can pass on Molly's gift. *Invisible Jerry* is full of heart and humour, and has a wonderful message. It covers a topic not often seen in children's books. Rather than focusing on embracing your uniqueness, this book is more subtle and encourages friendship and diversity. Jerry learns that people will see his talents and how worthy he is, by having someone else take that first step with him. Children are naturally egotistical at a young age, *Invisible Jerry* helped inspire some wider thinking beyond their own selves.

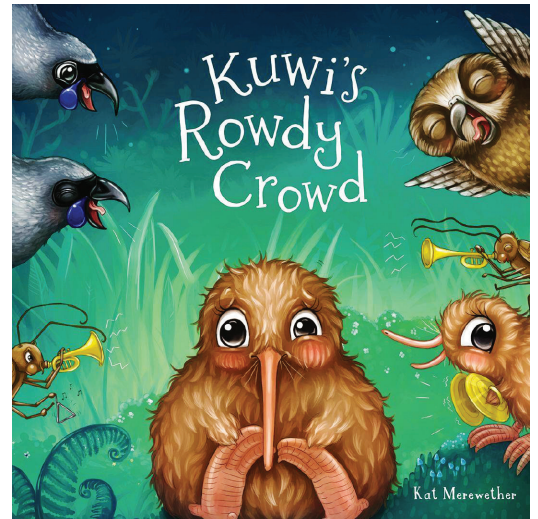


Kuwi's Rowdy Crowd

by Kat Merewether

Kuwi the kiwi tries to find a moment of peace and quiet in the chaos of parenthood, but everywhere she turns the volume just gets louder. Tap-dancing tomtits, karate-kicking kōkako and other noisy native friends join in the rowdy fun, until Kuwi can't take it anymore.

It has unique appeal to both adults and children – the humorous storyline will be familiar to parents everywhere and you can't help but feel for poor Kuwi. Children will also recognise themselves within the pages, and will have fun replicating the noises to match each illustration and guessing which creature will appear next. Onomatopoeia litter the pages, and Merewether's trademark alliteration make it a joy to read aloud. The rhyme and flow of the story keep it fresh for repeated readings, as do the endless hidden jokes within the illustrations. A handy pronunciation guide and dictionary of Māori terms has also been included on the back end page, making it a nice taster for anyone keen to introduce the next generation to te reo Māori.



A Kaleidoscope of Butterflies and other such collective nouns

by Kate Hursthouse

Have you ever seen a smack of jellyfish, a dazzle of zebras or a glimmer of dragonflies? Calligrapher and illustrator Kate Hursthouse has been getting her collective noun on, exploding the pages of her new book with the riches of our language and her imagination combined. This book is a visual feast, with vibrant illustrations taking readers on a journey to meet 25 of the planet's most fabulous, colourful creatures complete with their wonderful, wacky group names. The artwork inspires movement, dance and singing, practically begging little bodies to get moving. Language and illustration combine playfully to introduce young readers to the bounty of nature; a loveliness of ladybugs anyone?



QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT RICH MATHEMATICAL INTERACTIONS AT PLAYCENTRE

**Tell me
about that.
Whakamāramatia
mai.**

**Why do you
think that?
He aha i pēnā
ai ō whakaaro?**

**How do
you know?
He aha koe i
mōhio ai?**

**Are you
sure?
Kei te tika
tēnā?**

**How could
you check?
Me pēhea e āta
tiro tiro ai?**