

Candidates For Auckland Central



Jacinda Ardern - Labour



Nikki Kaye - National



Denise Roche - Green

& Who You Would Get For Education



Sue Moroney



Anne Tolley



Catherine Delahunty

"The difference between visionaries and dreamers is that visionaries make the dreams come true,"
Walter R. Mueller

Early Childhood Education - An Election Issue

By Marie Hindle

This month, we are dedicating some of our newsletter to looking at what the different parties mean for early childhood education with the upcoming election. Tracy Duthie represented out Parent Voice Committee at an evening with OMEP (the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education). We include Tracy's write up of that meeting, to give you a TLC parent's perspective.

We wanted to give you an insight into what each of the parties's would mean for TLC *and your family at TLC*. I won't pull my punches, my personal conclusion as TLC's licensee and as a parent of a TLC child is that the re-election of a National Government would be BAD for TLC probably meaning more cuts to the government funding we receive and the probability of

an increase in fees/charges if we are to maintain the quality of care we currently provide.

National's single focus seems to be on increasing participation in lower socio economic groups, which, so far, has been to the detriment of existing high quality centres.

Labour on the other hand, and Sue Moroney in particular, come across as having a real commitment to listening to, and understanding, the early childhood profession. A labour government would be good for TLC and for our TLC families, financially, and just as importantly, in the minds and motivation of our teachers, as they would feel valued as a profession.

The Green party have some laudable objectives for early childhood, I would like to see

some real detailed information as to how they would implement these. The Green party is unlikely to form a government, and more likely to go into coalition with another party to form a government. FYI Catherine Delahunty recently said she would resign if the Green party went into coalition with National.

As for ACT, well we came away from the OMEP evening writing them off as the lunatic fringe.

Does the outcome of the election depend on the All Blacks winning or losing the World Cup? Historically this has been the case. Which has left your TLC teachers with a real dilemma!

A Parent's View of The Parties & Their Early Childhood Policies, or lack of them.

By Tracy Duthie, Mother of Lucas Duthie (4 years) and Madeleine Duthie (2 years)

After three starts and numerous hours trying to think of an educational, informational, yet witty article I have failed and decided to make use of my university training instead. Yes, I ignored this until the night before it was due, have forgotten half of what I needed to write and have 'padded' this out with as many quotes as I have managed to get hold of. I apologise in advance!

So election time is nearly upon us and what better way to celebrate than to mosey on down to the local teachers college to listen to a bit of 'Party Policy'. So that's what we did, a wee group from TLC turned up, sat not too close to the front (but not too close to the back), took our seats and were ready to be wowed! This happened on Tuesday 6th of September and was hosted by the OMEP (the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education).

They, The Speakers, were there to discuss Early Childhood Education policy. The structure of this meeting was for each party representative to have a 5 minute introduction on their policies and then time afterwards for questions from the audience. My main decision for attending this meeting is that I went into the last election without really understanding what ECE policies were and why decisions for these were made. I have not felt comfortable with what National has achieved in ECE over the past three years so was, I felt, very open minded as to hearing their reasoning behind what they did and what they plan to do at the next election. I left the meeting however feeling extremely concerned with what lay ahead for ECE and amazed at how different members of parliament were ever voted in.

I know that sounds harsh but it really was quite crazy.... Hopefully by the end of this article you will understand what I mean. Actually I'm not even sure that article would be the right term, more a critical analysis of the pros and cons of each party – and their representative. I understand this is risky territory and I honestly would usually just sit back, take it all in and decide quietly to myself what I thought without making a fuss about my opinion. However (besides the fact that I promised Marie I'd write this) I really believe you should probably know what you will be voting for, or at least what was said in that meeting.

The first party representative was David Hay. David is from the Green Party, and to be fair on him, he is not the ECE representative and was just filling in... it was probably pretty scary ground standing in front of a bunch of opinionated woman (which was basically who was there). Still, he didn't really help himself. His intro

was a story which he tried to relate back to ECE and his one policy he mentioned was that the Green's want to raise the minimum wage to \$15 p/h. So I'm sure that minimum wage increases will affect ECE in some way but I was thinking that maybe something more directly related, something more substantial could have come up.... But no.

Through question time David replied to each and every question with another story which was not only a waste of time, they were actually quite boring. What David did manage to tell us between stories however is that **the Green party:**

Would like to bring better child:teacher ratios into all ECE – basically what is happening at TLC at the moment (we are so lucky).

Believe you make better economic advantage by investing in your children (Nice accurate point there David).

And made the point that it is about Quality!!!!

Overall I thought David was a good public speaker. If he knew what he was talking about so he didn't have to fill the gaps with irrelevant stories then he may have got more than a 2nd place – actually what am I talking about, he only got such a good score due to how bad the rest were. More importantly though, they seemed to have only one policy for ECE. Saying that, lower ratios is a good policy.

Next up (and I do wish I could leave her to last as it's always nice to finish on a high point however I won't) was Sue Moroney from Labour. Katherine had previously sent me a couple of letters that she had written so I had some idea that the passionate (opinionated woman) in the audience were in good company... let me just clarify now that when I write opinionated woman, this is not a derogatory term, it is GREAT! Without them there is a hell of a lot that would not happen in the world... not to mention we wouldn't have the vote (thanks KS)... but I digress... back to Sue.

Sue, Sue, Sue... yes I think in the matter of 2 freezing cold hours in a training college hall Sue Moroney became my personal ECE hero. This is not because she is part of the Labour party and it's not because she was the only one who actually gave us an introduction on policy... it was because she clearly had passion for ECE, for her job... she actually understood what the labour government were planning on doing and was prepared to fight for everything they have been trying to achieve. I'm sure I didn't capture all of labour's policy however some of it was:

Commitment to restore the funding for qualified teachers.

Increase in paid parental leave.

Implement a Minister for Children.

Sue also used phrases like ‘Early childhood education is the best investment the government could make’... This woman knew how to talk the talk at an ECE policy meeting.

Moving on though, Sue’s answers to questions were clear, articulate and knowledgeable. My vote for Sue is 1st place... by a country mile.

Lyn Murphy from ACT was next. Lyn’s policy was to:

Put education back in the hands of the parents.

To end the poverty trap

To make ECE accessible regardless of where you live and what you earn.

I really have no idea how ACT will achieve this – Lyn’s answer to any question was ‘Vote ACT we are innovative, we empower you’... that doesn’t sound so bad but let me put this into context:

Question: Why were the Centres of Innovation closed?

Lyn: ‘Vote ACT we are innovative, we empower you’

Question: How will your party help children with disabilities?

Lyn: ‘Vote ACT we are innovative, we empower you’

Question: Why was the 100% qualified teacher plan dropped?

Lyn: ‘Vote ACT we are innovative, we empower you’

Question: Is there a goal/policy for bilingual?

Lyn: ‘Vote ACT we are innovative, we empower you’

You get my point? The scary thing is, Lynn still gets 4th place for her effort.

Louise Upston from National however gets 5th place. Seriously this upsets me more than this paper would let on. Sure it feels like National have stuffed up ECE over the past 3 years so wouldn’t this be the PERFECT opportunity to right some wrongs, to let us know the reasoning for the decisions and most importantly tell us what is in store for the next three years if they stay in power? Apparently not! Louise was not prepared to tell us anything..... nope, nothing at all. So we asked when we would hear about the National policy... nothing, she wouldn’t even tell us that! So we asked if there was a policy, no, no, no – apparently that would be, and I quote, “a career limiting move” to tell us. So to put this in plain old English, **National came to a ECE policy meeting and would not tell us what their policy is, when we could find out or even if there was a policy.** I’m not sure about you but that actually scared me. Why would they not tell us anything? Best case scenario is that there is no new

policy, worst case is that National were NOT prepared to give this group of opinionated woman such bad news.

At this point I would go into Louise’s answers to questions – clearly she wasn’t allowed to answer questions however so she focused a lot on the ECE Taskforce Report. What Louise told us about this report, was that a lot of work has gone into it and National are going to spend some time reviewing it and then will decide if they will use any of it – clearly a useful exercise. Oh and should I also mention at this point that there was only one ECE teacher on the taskforce, the rest was made up of professionals..... hmmm.....

..... actually I’m revoking 5th place – Louise doesn’t even get a place.

Finally we had Ram Parkash who was a friend of Peter Dunne – United Future. Peter, being the sole member of this party, is obviously extremely busy trying to fulfill a whole parties obligations as a one man band so took the opportunity to pull in Ram to help out. Well I have to say that he couldn’t have chosen a better friend. The first 10 minutes of Ran’s 5 minute introduction was to talk about how wonderful Peter is and all that he has achieved over the past years. Every answer to every question followed the same format to the point where my notes (yes I wrote notes) just say ‘Go Peter’. Credit where credit is due though – after Ran’s 10 minute ‘plug’ for Peter he did tell us the following policies for ECE:

Parents are the drivers of children’s education

Parents are a child’s first teacher

Parent’s to choose the most appropriate ECE provider

More men will be encouraged to join ECE.

Increase funding with a focus on special needs.

I’m not sure we can classify those all as policies however I was impressed that ECE had actually been thought about. Therefore Peter gets 3rd place.

In conclusion (I always ended my essays at Uni like that), the OMEP meeting had its high’s and its lows for me. My highs were around being extremely impressed to find such a passionate and knowledgeable ECE politician who really made me feel that our children count and that their futures matter. My low was finding out that ECE is NOT a priority for National and will be watching this space carefully as I suggest you all should. Between this I had a bit of storytelling, found out that ACT is innovative and empowering and learnt a whole lot about what Ram thinks of awesome Peter.

This was not really the ‘stating the facts so other parents can draw their own conclusions’ paper my old lecturers would have hoped for. I do hope however that you have learnt a bit more about what goes on in an OMEP meeting.

Jacinda Ardern

On Early Childhood Education

I sent a preview of our newsletter to all three candidates for Auckland Central featured on the front page, and invited them to respond. Only Jacinda Ardern has done so, please see her response below. I DID get an email from Nikki, but it was a general one saying she had my email address and did I wish to receive emails from the National Party.

I want to thank Jacinda for taking the time to respond, and for valuing early childhood education for children in Auckland Central.



I have been in Parliament for one term now, and one of the most valuable lessons I have learnt in that time is how incredibly important investment in our children is. As Labour's spokesperson on Youth Justice, I have visited countless youth justice facilities. The message I have heard time and time again from experts is that if we truly want to prevent our children from facing issues later in life, and make sure we give them the very best start, we have to do more – and that includes improving access to quality Early Childhood Education (ECE).

Over the past couple of years, Labour has assembled a team of experts in the field of children and child development together to talk about where we need to go from here; how we give families more support, and how we give New Zealand kids a better start. The result is a comprehensive package called 'Children First', of which Early Childhood Education plays a significant part.

Research tells us that quality early childhood education is one of the best investments any government can make, returning at least \$11 for every dollar invested. That is why I find it incomprehensible that the Government have slashed \$400million from the ECE budget, and it appears that they are considering looking at further ways to reduce funding.

Early Childhood Education Centres have a valuable part to play not only in educating our children, but in bringing our local communities together, too. The current services that these centres provide enable communities to lend support to parents who may either be working or volunteering in their communities by providing 20 hours of free early childhood education for

parents; an investment which benefits kids, their parents, and the community as a whole.

Despite initially telling voters that they wouldn't touch the 20 hours free provision, the Government has reneged. This will mean further fee increases for parents, which will undermine access to quality ECE, to the detriment of New Zealand's children. Funding cuts to ECE implemented by the Government in February this year have already increased costs to families, and created another obstacle for parents who just want their child to receive a good start in life.

It's not just about fees, it's also about quality.

As you may be aware, prior to 2010, Early Childhood Education Centres were encouraged to have 100% registered teachers to ensure that our children were receiving quality education. However, the government announced that it would no longer fund providers for 100% qualified teachers. \$295 million dollars' worth of funding has been removed from these providers, which undermines their ability to deliver the best quality education to children.

Labour is committed to ensuring that New Zealand offers world class early childhood education to every child. We're grateful for the work that organisations such as The Learning Centre do in ensuring that children in the Auckland area get the opportunities they deserve in life. Labour will work alongside ECE providers in order to find practical solutions to the issues that they currently face instead of just arbitrarily cutting money out of their budget at a long term cost to us all. After all, every child deserves the best start in life.

By Jacinda Ardern, Labour Candidate for Auckland Central

Research tells us that quality early childhood education is one of the best investments any government can make, returning at least \$11 for every dollar invested.

The Auckland 30 Year Plan

Submissions Close 25 October

Are you even aware that Auckland's council is drafting a long term, i.e. 30 year strategic plan, which closes for submissions on the 25th of October?

Well, I am ashamed to say, I was not until one of our parents enlightened me, and pointed out that if I wanted to make any submissions regarding early childhood education, I need to get a move on. So, I read it, and some things jumped out at me.

One of the targets is: **“By 2017 All Pre-School Children demonstrate at the B4 school check that they have strong family or whanau attachments and have the foundation for success in school and life.”**

HOWEVER, there is nothing in the plan about the importance of, or support for, healthy secondary attachment between children in early childhood environments and their caregivers. It is a sad fact, that the majority of childcare centres in Auckland do NOT practice primary caregiving, and some actively design their rosters to avoid attachments between the children and the caregivers. Extensive research has shown that healthy secondary attachment with caregivers in group care is critical for children's long term wellbeing and mental health.

The plan goes on to say about early childhood education: “Participation in foundation learning at home and early childhood education (ECE), kohanga reo and Pacific language nests **is key to preparing children for school** and contributes to good outcomes later in life.” I feel it is important to challenge that the *role* of early childhood education is to ‘prepare children for school’, I see this more of a happy byproduct of quality ECE, but it can become dangerous if treated as the main goal of ECE. At TLC we have our Casey Literacy Club, and Robyn works hard to get our families/whanau to accept that the underlying foundations for literacy have to be built without rushing the children into writing and reading before those foundations have been established. If preparing children for school becomes the goal of ECE in Auckland, I worry that these foundations will be compromised, and other critical aspects of quality of care, like healthy attachment, will be ignored altogether.

Another target is: **“By 2020 increase the number of early childhood education facilities by 100 (10 per year) in southwest and west Auckland (areas of highest need).”**

What THIS ignores, is that what is needed is QUALITY childcare, it focusses purely on quantity. Sadly, we at TLC regularly hear horror stories of low quality childcare centres in West

Auckland. Just creating MORE childcare spaces to meet demand, is very short sighted. ALL childcare centres are NOT equal, and low quality childcare is NOT good for our under five year olds. So just promoting increase participation without prioritising and supporting high quality of care is just wrong headed. This is the same issue that I have with National's current ECE Policy.

The council needs to prioritise important things that contribute to quality of care like group size, and sadly the National government recently allowed childcare centres to be BIGGER contrary to all indications about quality of care requiring smaller group sizes.

The plan DOES have as a priority to ‘Put Children and Young People First’.

Well, I would like to see changes to the district plan, the current design of which pushes childcare environments out of residential areas and onto main roads or industrial areas. That does not support families and build communities. Changes to the district plan to put children before parking, is not mentioned anywhere.

I asked myself whether any of this really affects us at TLC? In reality, well no. We value healthy secondary attachments for our children and have primary caregiving because of this. Next year, we will be looking at moving to continuity of care to further support this. We see early childhood education's value much more holistically than just as a launching pad to ‘sitting still and listening to instructions’ at school and the ability to compete with reading and writing with ones peers when one gets there. We already strive for, and value quality of care. And we will continue to do these things irrespective of whether Auckland City Council ‘gets it’ or not. But I DO care what happens for other under five year olds in Auckland, and would hope that if the council does help to create 100 more centres out there, that they are quality ones.

Want to read more about the plan?

[Draft Auckland Plan](#)

Want to feedback on the plan?

By Post:

Auckland Council

The Auckland Plan

Private Bag 92300

Auckland 1142

Freepost Authority 237170

By Email:

theaucklandplan@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

By website:

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Closing date: 4:00pm, Tuesday 25th October 2011.

Strategic planning is worthless -- unless there is first a strategic vision.

John Naisbitt

Eating Dirt Could be good for you

By Guida Lawrence

When we watch how infants and toddlers explore so much of their world with their mouth, this could be good news. As spring and summer are here, the babies will spend time outside on the deck. They will come into contact with dirt. We have a garden, a sandpit, trees, leaves, herbs, grasses, chipbark, stones, rainwater, in fact all the elements of the natural urban environment. The good news is that research has shown how eating a little dirt activates the baby's immune response. Without babies' instinctive drive to mouth everything, their immature immune system would not be exposed to the very things which help it develop, learning what to ignore and what to respond to. According to Dr Weinstock at Tufts Medical Centre in Boston, "children raised in an ultraclean environment are not being exposed to organisms that help them develop appropriate immune regulatory circuits".

Although we can be concerned about bacteria as a source of infections and illnesses, it is handy to know that the mouth, throat and intestines are actually like the outside of our bodies - and capable of handling the thousands of species of bacteria which eventually inhabit us! (We are born sterile - but within hours bacteria begin colonizing us.)

A big concern today is the over-use of antibacterial products which promote fear of bacteria and in fact may actually contribute to antibiotic-resistant, disease-causing bacteria. In the babies' room at TLC, we teachers use either soap and water for our own hands, and a

sanitising hand rub after wiping a child's nose. And of course if a child exhibits a bacterial infection like conjunctivitis they are isolated from contact with the other babies and then go home. Immediately after this we wash the babies' toys - with soap and water, and some of them are sun-dried. (Toys are washed weekly in normal circumstances.) The only anti-bacterial product we use is for wiping the nappy change table. The dining table is wiped with diluted mild soap spray after eating; and glasses, plates and spoons are washed with eco-friendly washing powder. Bibs and facecloths go through the washing machine with standard laundry detergent and a splash of Dettol. And that's all. We want to minimise infants' exposure to chemical anti-bacterial products. Their world is not a hospital!

Another concern, and rightly so, is legionnaires disease. Legionnaires is an infectious disease caused by inhaling air particles which carry the bacteria. The bacteria actually live and breed in water, and are usually found in airconditioning units etc, but could also be carried in the moisture in soil. To reduce any risk, when potting up plants we allow the mix to dry and rest for several weeks before introducing it into the children's environment.

This summer, we encourage you to let your babies roam - outside on the grass, at the beach, in the garden - playing and perhaps grazing on a little dirt. And rest assured that their immune systems will thank you!

EE Cummings
The world is
mud-licious and
puddle-
wonderful





Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.

Steve Jobs



Nappy Changes As Respectful & Reciprocal Interaction

By Elena Marouchos

While waiting in a public facility, I could not help but glance at a mother briskly and efficiently changing her toddler's nappy. Not a word was uttered. The mother completely focused on the task at hand while her child's gaze wandered between the passers-by and the flickering fluorescents. As I absorbed the scene, I wondered if this was a typical interaction between mother and child. My heart wavered and I hoped instead it was the very public nature of this location on a busy Saturday morning that made exchanged what should be such an intimate interaction with such a passive act.

On the way home I could not help but reflect on a recent experience with one of our toddlers. As a primary caregiver I know that nappy changes are built for intimacy. Rather than see them as a chore to be done I look forward to spending quality time with each of the children in my care. During our engagement I learn many wonderful things. It starts with simple things like observing how much they are able to and enjoy participating in the routine, whether they are they able to understand and follow simple instructions

like "can you lift your leg" or "your other arm please". Depending on their response I may gently touch the body part in question and in this way the toddler learns not only the words associated with each action but is also able to anticipate them the next time. Consistency and repetition are key to ensuring that toddlers become familiar with routines. Success? A smile when I see a toddler lift his/her leg as I begin to scrunch up the legs of their pants to step into as this is an indication that they know what follows. I might confirm this by saying "I like how you lift your leg as this shows me you understand what happens next / what I am asking". In this way nappy changes are not a chore but a mutually gratifying experience.

Over time our exchanges evolve to including counting steps as opposed to asking them to climb up or down. Asking them to help remove or put on items of clothing and a whole host of general topics depending on their interests. Sometimes it's the sounds of vehicles passing by, a bird or a noise in the kitchen that attracts their attention while at others it may be nearby items that catch their eye such as

switching the lights on and off or wanting to know which bag belongs to whom. *Yes, sometimes it does require a bit of negotiation and it becomes a dance between bringing the child back to the task at hand and indulging in their need to explore the world around them.*

After experiencing idyllic moments such as these, with the toddler in question for nearly 6 months, imagine my surprise when after a bout of illness and a few days away the minute he heard the words “nappy change”, “no” was substituted for his previous eagerness to run to the nappy change table. Participation was exchanged with tantrums and our exchanges seemed more like reminders of what needed to be done e.g. “I can see you are upset but I do need to change your nappy as your bottom might get sore.” At first I thought it may be because he was still feeling unwell or unsettled because of a recent move and or his mum was away or if there was a new caregiver at home. After a few days and no signs of improvement I discussed the matter with colleagues and his parents in an attempt to understand if similar experiences were being had or if this child’s perception was changing because of something I was doing differently. I was particularly concerned that this child could sense my increasing anxiety. I just could not understand how in the space of a few weeks our wonderful moments were replaced by anticipated anxiety. Eventually by understanding what was happening at home we were able to establish that it was particularly the nappy changes after naptimes that were troublesome for the toddler. Instead of taking my cues from this child, I assumed that what worked before should work today but I had forgotten what a how powerful the will of a toddler is in ensuring successful participation particularly while still learning to self-regulate his/her emotions. Toddler will is a crucial part of identity formation. It also does not mean that none of the factors mentioned earlier did not play a role in but rather that this change in attitude was directly related to him having a better understanding of what his preferences were and the confidence to ‘voice’ his dissatisfaction. It seems that this toddler was trying to tell us is that he does not particularly enjoy having his nappy changed immediately upon waking up but prefers to “chill out” for a while and have a glass of milk or two instead. In the process we also learned that warning him of an impending nappy change yields in greater co-operation.

Aside from the reminder lesson on toddler identity formation and the development of will, I was also forced to reflect on how we can turn difficult and dreaded moments into mutually gratifying experiences that change our perception and foster partnerships. I sought the wisdom of a RIE guru – Janet Lansbury whose words often serve as a reminder of respectful and reciprocal interactions with children.

In order to transform a mundane task into a time of mutual enrichment we need to:

Set the tone with a respectful beginning. It starts with us warning the child that we want to check their nappy rather than just pull down their pants to check or use negative words like “stinky”, “dirty” or “smelly”. You wouldn’t walk up behind an adult and pull on their pants commenting on the odour so therefore why do these to a child? *For similar reasons during we prefer to say we would like to put on a “fresh nappy” as opposed to a “clean” one.*

Peace begins on the change table.

Ute Strub

Below, Tully races to get to the change table



Children don’t like having their play interrupted and most nappy changes can be postponed for a few moments. Instead wait for a break in their play and then discreetly say, “I’d like to check your nappy now please” Then, “I need to change your nappy now please.” If the child balks, you might give the option, “would you like to walk to the changing table or shall I carry you?” If he resists, you may be able to give him the choice of a bit more time. “I see you’re still playing. In five minutes we will change your diaper.” *BUT please remember to adhere to limits and boundaries if set otherwise you are in essence providing a loophole which your toddlers are very adept at discovering!* Toddlers crave autonomy and are therefore more amenable to cooperation if we respect their need to make some decisions.

Give your undivided attention. Slow down; embrace this time together by including the child. Ask for assistance instead of distracting them. Focus on the moment and use gentle “asking hands” instead of busy, efficient ones. It is these gentle and unhurried moments that breed trust and makes them willing participants as opposed to resistant ones.

Look out for cues – verbal and non-verbal. If the child seems distracted, acknowledge it and wait. “You hear that loud noise. I hear it, too. It was the... Are you ready for me to unsnap your pants?” Or, “You’re crying. Did I take it off too quickly? Do you need me to hold you for a moment before

we continue?

Ask for assistance. Remind yourself to pay attention to the whole person, not just his lower half. Don't do anything without telling him first. In this way we are not only treating him with respect but we are encouraging him to absorb language with all his senses. (Cold wipes, the snaps of vests etc.) It was only when I thought about how it must feel to have a cold wet wipe on a warm bottom that I thought to ask toddlers if they would prefer a warm one. "Warm", is now a popular choice on wintry days, although sometimes I wonder if it not the thrill of seeing the tap being turned on that is the draw card?

There is such pleasure to be found in their responsiveness and they soon show you what they are capable of. How they can lift their arms up, open their legs hold the tube of cream and nappy. By announcing what you are going to do next you are also giving them time to prepare themselves. Remember, that as adults we take for granted what is conscious thought but infants and toddler need time to think about which part of their bodies to use and how to use them. In essence, when asking an infant to lift his/her bottom or a toddler to lift a limb you are essentially asking them to contract or extend different muscles. The words we use and the way we touch are all messages that need to be interpreted. Once the nappy change is finished, I may ask "would you like to climb down or would you like me to pick you up?" I then wait to see whether his arms are extended or if he moves his body as if preparing to climb down the stairs.

Be flexible. Stay open to new possibilities. When infants become mobile, they need us to adjust to their needs as best we can. A baby might wish to roll to his tummy to be wiped, or be in an all fours crawling position. In my experience most toddlers prefer to stand. After all their view of the world is no longer from lying flat on their backs and rolling around but from standing upright albeit if still holding onto objects for support. *Holding onto a bathtub at home is a wonderful alternative to the rails we have on our nappy change tables at TLC if wanting to do this at home.* The 'dance' however, is between continuing to ask for cooperation, but to compromise and allow the child to do things his way if you can make it work. By inviting the toddler to participate in different ways such as holding onto items, and taking their nappy off we are enabling and trust them to start taking responsibility for themselves whenever possible.

Remember, your goal is partnership. And no, as I was so aptly reminded, not all nappy changes are plain sailing! A toddler who is secure in his sense of belonging, well-being and therefore attachment WILL and DOES test... OFTEN. We are not robots after all and sometimes we start off on the wrong foot or the toddler is too tired (or we are) and the whole thing goes a bit pear shaped. As one mother aptly put it "Forget about feeling connected — we may not even *like* our baby in that moment." The reality is that to be in an authentic partnership we need to acknowledge these moments even if it is only to say "I can see you didn't enjoy this nappy change" or "the next time perhaps I can do better and find other ways of...".

Ruth Anne Hammond in her book, *Respecting Babies: A New Look At Magda Gerber's RIE Approach*, reminds us "if [a parent] is usually slow, gentle, and attentive, an occasional lapse is emotionally manageable for the child, and may even

When you use physical care as time to be really present with the baby, it's easier and more natural and, in the long run, less time consuming because the baby's needs have been met on several development levels (physical, emotional, and social). Once you make the commitment to spend quality time with each diapering, you guarantee that each baby has individual time while in group care.

Being With Babies, by Beverly Kovach & Denise Da Ros-Voseles



be helpful in the process of learning that her parent is human."

In witnessing that public nappy change I was forced to reflect on my own practice and reminded that nappy changes should never be a passive act — it is not just about getting the job done and having a "clean" nappy. We have to remember that "our hands are a baby's introduction to the world. If they touch slowly, gently, and "ask" a child for cooperation rather than demand it, we are rewarded with a relationship bound in trust, respect and the inexorable knowledge of our importance to each other."

I would like to thank Starex for designing and building our new Toddler stand up change table. We, and the toddlers, love it.

Marie Hindle

Finding Balance Is Really A Lifetime Process

Magda Gerber

By Josie Lui

Inspired by Magda's words above, I would like to share some of my learning from the Mamaku children and Magda Gerber's Educaring Approach (RIE). To implement RIE in practice, all teachers must take a very important first step to trust babies and little children and allow them the time, chances and challenges to work out their own ways as they try to achieve balance. Teaching the lovely and physical toddlers in the Mamaku room, I can, every day, see how they initiate this learning. For me, it is impossible to understand those little toddlers and appreciate them unless we can really know what significant learning happens in this process and how much courage they have to have to succeed.

The Mamaku children learn about their bodies through constant trying out. At the toddler stage, the children's bodies are driven to move, bounce up and down, run, climb and so on. In a developmental perspective, what the toddlers enjoy very much is to explore the outer limits of their balance (*Davis & Keyser, 1997*). How to avoid slipping over while running down a hill fast, how to move steps on a rope, how to balance on all fours on the spinning board are just a few examples. The Mamaku children set themselves on all sorts of balancing tasks every day and they never stop learning what their bodies can and cannot do, how strong they are and how their bodies work. In addition, they have to get in touch with their bodies to make constant judgements on how comfortable their bodies feel, how much further they can go, how to change positions safely and so on. All this learning teaches them to be genuine and authentic to themselves.

The Mamaku children also learn how to deal with rich but complicated feelings and emotions in this process. If you had a chance to closely observe how a toddler challenges himself/herself to accomplish balance in a task, you would have understood the courage, perseverance, persistence, self-confidence, problem solving skills he/she must have when they overcome the uncertainty, fear and handle upset and frustration. I have seen how a Mamaku child cautiously knelt down on the spinning board and brought his legs forward to balance up into an all four position (The spinning board is designed to spin with centrifugal force, so it is hard to even move a bit on it). He looked into my eyes smiling when finally achieving this move. I could feel the exhilaration, pride and satisfaction in him when hearing his exclamation. It is absolutely amazing to see how very often the children experience emotional highs and lows with great resilience in a short time. Finding balance physically is no easy job because the children are dealing with the outer world and their inner world simultaneously. Thinking about ourselves, could we do better really? Each single child is a hero in the process of finding his/her balance.



We come into this world head first and go out feet first; in between, it is all a matter of balance.
Paul Boese



Following Magda Gerber's Educaring Approach (RIE), TLC teachers are making every effort to create an age appropriate environment in which freedom of movement is encouraged and opportunities for physical play are provided. Going back to the beginning, to help children to gain life competence and confidence through finding balance at the beginning of their lives. What's even more important is to trust children's exploration and have confidence in their emerging ability. As a teacher, I feel fortunate enough to be part of their journey and from the bottom of my heart, appreciate how our children demonstrate many important and valuable personal qualities to our adult world in this process.

L. Davis & J. Keyser (1997). Becoming the parent you want to be. New York:Broadway.

A Letter of Thanks To The TLC Community

By Trisha Martinez

My son, Joaquin, had just finished his first term in school. I must say I am really happy about how he has settled in school. He comes home with stories about playing with Karlo, JC, Tyler, and Caydell; about the frogs in the tank in Room 8; about helping a new child at school; about making vegetable soup and popcorn... He sings the songs they sing at school. He shows my husband and I the dance steps that the junior school does together every morning. His teacher tells me he's very interested in class. He enjoys reading the books he brings home from school. On days that I drop him off at school I could sense that he's developed good relationships with his peers. All of these tell me that Joaquin is happy and well-settled in school. I attribute this to several things: 1) He is already good friends with a child in another class even before he started school; 2) There are many Filipino children who attend the school; 3) He's got wonderful teachers with whom he's developed good relationships; and 4) He's had three amazing years at TLC.

Joaquin started at TLC when he was two. From the beginning, I saw first-hand how much he was learning being with him at TLC Mondays to Fridays. Now that he's in school I see how the education he received at TLC greatly supports him in school. His curiosity, love for learning, belief in himself, sense of responsibility, kindness, respect for oneself and others, desire to work with others – these are



dispositions he developed throughout all the years of uninterrupted play, loving care from his teachers, pleasant meal times, teachers taking interest in his interests, working on projects, doing "Show and Tell", reading stories, singing, and dancing, developing friendships, dialogues with peers and teachers, constructing and creating with various materials and tools, teachers allowing him to be who he is... Words cannot express how grateful I am for all the meaningful and invaluable learning he experienced throughout these years.

As a teacher, I have always believed how invaluable quality early childhood education is. Research has shown its many benefits. Now they are right before my eyes as I witness how Joaquin is settling at school after three years at TLC.

I believe that the whole society contributes to child rearing. Different sectors of society support each other in enriching a child's life. And when they

Be a yardstick of quality. Some people aren't used to an environment where excellence is expected.

Steve Jobs



take on such a noble responsibility with joy, passion, commitment, and love the child flourishes - as what I've seen has happened with my son. My husband and I feel truly blessed and honoured for receiving the TLC community's loving support in raising our dear Joaquin.



To the left, the Kowhai group canvas created for the art auction.

“Each community to which a child belongs, whether it is a family home or an early childhood setting outside the home, provides opportunities for new learning to be fostered: for children to reflect on alternative ways of doing things; make connections across time and place; establish different kinds of relationship; and encounter different points of view. These experiences enrich children's lives and provide them with the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to tackle new challenges” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.9).

Patriotic Fans

By Zoe Powell

What to write? What to write? Gosh it has been such a busy few months what with weddings, art auctions, holidays... the list goes on! Then it hit me, I have to share my experience of the Rugby World Cup! This topic seems to have consumed almost every person I have talked to, even those that hate to admit they are fans seem thrilled to be experiencing the buzzing atmosphere and the proud butterflies we all have! When I strolled Queens street on the opening night I don't think I was quite ready for the amount of people I saw; such a small town gal from Hawkes Bay. I was then fortunate enough to watch a game at North Harbour Stadium, there amongst the proud fans I joined in the Mexican wave, cheering and 'ole' at every kick off. Since then I have been hooked and haven't missed a game!

The Tuis have been so excited to share in the historical moment, learning about country flags, wearing their much loved rugby shirts and sharing their renditions of the haka. Over the last month I have seen such empowered, proud young people sharing stories of their favorite players, their experiences and their passion for our country's much loved game. “The All Blacks are from New Zealand and I'm from New Zealand” I was told by Taiki with a widespread grin across his face. There is a word 'Taurangawaewae' which means 'the place where I stand' which fits with how our children have embraced the contagious RWC. They are proud, they know they belong here and that this is our country, our team, our history. Their whakapapa (genealogy) has further developed

with new knowledge of identity and where they come from.

There are many incidental learning outcomes surrounding this event. I have observed letter, symbol, pattern and number recognition, children are making sense of the world around them as they explore our own and other countries. I see such social competence when watching the children actively playing rugby on their own TLC field; knowing when to release the ball and each other from tackle. There is constant discussion, negotiation, leadership opportunities, team work, verbal/nonverbal communication, respect and responsibility... The list goes on. The children are gaining control over their bodies; both fine and gross motor skills are being practiced and fine tuned. This is not just an awesome experience but one filled with learning that we as adults may not pick up on but if you have a closer look there is a vast variety of learning occurring.

I asked the Tuis how we could celebrate the RWC and we decided to dress up all week in support of our favourite teams... So please join us as we embrace the last days before the final. Kia kaha Aotearoa



Art Auction Gallery

Thank You For All Those Who Supported This Special Event



Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. **Steve Jobs**



TLC Teacher Only Day

Tuesday 15th November. TLC will be closed for teacher professional development, including the annual review of our policies and procedures. TLC will also be initiating a self-review process for continuity of care for under 30 month olds.

Please note - normal fees apply.

Annual Policy Review

Please note, that if you wish to feedback with regards to any of our policies or procedures, please email Marie@thelearningcentre.co.nz before Friday the 11th of November.

PVC Social Events

Thursday the 15th December Xmas / Hanukkah Party - the whole whaanau is welcome!

Summer Holidays

The dates TLC will be closed for the summer holidays

are: Last day open Friday the 24th December. **Closed Monday the 26th December to Friday the 6th January 2012.** We re-open on Monday the 9th of January 2012.

Upcoming

In the month of November, we will be sending out our **annual community survey**.

If you would like to make suggestions as to WHAT we ask you or 'measure' then please let your parent voice committee members know.

In the month of November, we will also be sitting down to do our **annual management plan** for 2012. If you have opinions about such things as priorities for repairs and maintenance, capital investment, communications with our community, then again, can you either email me

Feedback

We love to get your feedback on our newsletter from you, all comments are welcome. I am aware for instance in this issue,

that Politics is a dangerous area, the commentary included has been OUR opinions, and we have restricted ourselves purely to consideration of things Early Childhood related. If you think we should NOT dabble in politics, feel free to say so.

Please send all comments/ feedback to Marie@thelearningcentre.co.nz