

**Many people like to think that they'll find balance after they find success. But in reality, achieving balance is success.**

Brian Koslow



## Finding Balance Is a Lifetime Process

The title of this article is a quote from Magda Gerber, who I think was as much a wise woman, or philosopher as she was an infant and toddler expert.

The quote on the left was sent to me from 'Zen Moments' by Chris, because he knows that the search for balance is one of the driving forces of my life. How to balance my work with my family? How to find time for my health and fitness with a business and family? How to balance the financial imperatives of a business with my heartfelt values, and responsibilities, as a childcare licensee?

The search for balance is very important to me, because to be honest, I am not very good at it. It can be hard to balance everything, when you want to do *everything* really well! Can you put in the time required to have a successful job/business and be the best possible mum? Recently I had my in-laws staying with me from the UK, and I did my best to be hospitable, but one day my daughter Annelise aged 4 said to me "Mum, you spend a lot of time talking to Mike and Anne, and you don't spend a lot of time talking to me". Well, after that, I tried to balance being a good hostess with being a better mum and making sure I gave my children some quality 'full attention', explaining myself to my guests as I did so. However, I am aware that I also neglected TLC a little during this time, as I had a number of emails starting with "did you get my last email?". I am blessed with my colleagues at TLC, they were very very understanding of the juggling act I was trying to perform.

The press has recently been full of the news from the report from the children's commissioner which concluded that care for under two year olds was the fastest growing group in childcare, but that government policy focused on

quality care for three and four year olds. The report recommended extending paid parental leave. What struck me reading all the press, was how polarised all the news reporting was. There wasn't much 'well balanced' reporting/arguments.

Nowhere was there talk of how parenting classes could help support parents to have the knowledge and skills to get the most out of these early years. I did not read much about how employers could do so much more to support part time working. Nobody talks about how not every woman is an 'earth mother' cut out for full time parenting, or that not every family has a whaanau network to support them.

I was heartened by the descriptions of 'quality' education for under twos though: "*What matters The main elements of quality education and care for under-twos are, according to the experts:*

- High adult to child ratios
- Small group sizes
- Skilled staff
- Positive, sensitive and responsive care
- Superior physical environments with well-defined indoor and outdoor spaces
- Significant parental involvement
- Attention to health and safety, Effective learning programmes- *The Dominion Post*

Sadly this came at a time when the government had announced it was making group size legal limits BIGGER, after they had already reduced the requirements for qualified staff. I know, I know, they are trying to balance the books. I fail to see how increasing group sizes helps them do this though.

## Tristram a deep thinker

Tristram, I have noticed your ability to contemplate. It is a gift to be able to do this, to make the time especially in this day and age when our lives are busy and the world is filled with so many distractions. We all have an emotional need to think, play, dream, explore and develop our skills, but being able to be quiet and meditative is also important - to have (I believe) a deeper sense of peace. I like to watch you when you are in a 'thinking' mood and not a 'doing' mood. A balance between these two is important in living a happy, purpose-filled life. I am pleased you have a strong sense of belonging at TLC to develop your ideas, to watch, to listen, to think, to relax and of course to dream.

Some people think contemplation is like daydreaming, but scientists now say its one of our most complicated activities, the way we shape ourselves and become aware of those things that we have felt without thinking. The heart has a quiet voice and (as you seem to know Tristram) we need to allow our thoughts to unfold. *A Learning Story by Roxy October 2010*



Then again, don't think. Daydream... The heart has a quiet voice. Allow thoughts to unfold: all those emptinesses that precede stumbling across the unexpected. That aching dullness is so often the catalyst for better things, for breakthroughs.

Ilse Crawford

## Transition Farewell A Reflection

(reflecting on my practice with a view to improvement)

Josie (a Mamaku teacher) arrived to take two of our toddlers, X and Y, downstairs for a visit as part of their transitional process. Josie had got X's bag and was holding it ready to go. She had Y by the hand and was waiting for X. Instead of going to Josie, X came and stood by me. She wanted me to give her a cuddle which I duly did. I explained gently to her what was about to happen. X would go downstairs to play with her friends and come back upstairs after lunch. X was clinging to me. I said, putting her down, "Its time to get ready". She was already wearing a dress-up skirt so I suggested she might like to wear the new glittery angel wings. With Josie's agreement we decided together it might be easier if I accompanied X downstairs. X wanted me to pick her up and carry her but I said, "You can hold my hand". I encouraged her to walk. On X's part there was a general reluctance to go. When we got there I tried to encourage X to be actively involved by helping put her bag away. I said to her, "Which cubbyhole would you like"? I showed her with my hand, "This one or that one ... a choice of these two". X started to cry when she realised I was about to depart. I naturally wanted to help her and lingered too long.

I have grown up with the model of being very protective of children and in a sense to 'rescue' and comfort them especially when they cry. Through the RIE philosophy I now have a far better understanding of working respectfully and co-operatively with children and allowing a child to fully express their emotions. A crying child that I am familiar with (such as X) can still pull on my heart-strings. It is a deep subconscious response. I was attempting to be respectful and responsive. I told X what was happening. I was encouraging her to participate by helping to put her bag away and to find an activity that would settle her. **The trick is finding the right balance** and knowing

What is a 'reflection'? We talk about 'reflective practice'; and its importance in our October 2009 Newsletter which can be found on our website.

when to move away. As a beginning teacher it is not always easy to judge it. I know the transition process sometimes is not easy and it is a big change for a child to adapt to. It's a totally new space with new teachers – even though some of the children X knows and is familiar with. After I explained to her what was happening and Josie was there to support her. It would have been best for me to have read only one story and then promptly moved away and out the door. I can see clearly I stayed far too long.

This experience gave me greater insight into how difficult it is for parents to separate themselves from a crying child. All their instincts are telling them to stop and comfort. I can see how it can bring up feelings of guilt (leaving a child in the first place regardless of the reason) and feelings of inadequacy in a parent (emotional buttons being pushed). A distressed child has a powerful pull. I also know X can be skillful at getting what she wants but at the end of the day she is still only a toddler with huge needs and wants.

As teachers, we have our primary care children and it is only natural that a bond of attachment is formed over time. You become their 'emotional rock' in the centre environment. I have worked closely with X in my time at TLC and she has been one of my primary care children.

I know the theory but putting it into practice can be challenging. On reflection I can see clearly what I did. I needed to say good-bye and leave her with Josie supporting her until she settled. This is precisely what I intend to do next time. It was a very good learning experience for me. Instead of making things easier for X I inadvertently was compounding the problem. *by Roxy*

## “Good Girl” A Reflection

(reflecting on my inappropriate language)

I was sitting at the table with four toddlers having morning tea. I was passing a small stainless steel jug (after I had filled it) to each child so that they could pour their own water into a glass. I said “good girl” to a toddler after she had successfully poured her water without spilling a drop. My colleague pointed out to me what I had said. I was astounded that I had actually said it without realising it.

It is best to deal with children in a warm sensitive manner without any judgement. When you use a phrase like that you are automatically putting children into a good or bad box. This is not at all helpful or constructive. Children can consciously and unconsciously try and seek approval. Good and bad is too black and white. We want to raise children who are authentic, confident, secure within themselves. We want to love and support children to be who they are.

I realised I was a product of my environment. ***This phrase is deeply chiselled into my consciousness.*** What appalled me was how instinctively that phrase has become part of my automatic language and (most of the time) I was unaware I was even saying it. I had asked my colleague to specifically help me with this as I realised it was a challenge. I asked her to point out whenever I use that particular phrase. This helped a great deal and increased my level of awareness. I started observing and listening more carefully to my close relatives and I could not believe how often it was used to my younger nieces and nephews. I was simply modelling a key phrase I had grown up with.

I now have renewed resolve to weed that phrase out of my consciousness and out of my daily speech. Now I monitor my speech and language more closely and can stop myself and rephrase. It is like weeding a garden ... I need to be vigilant. It is getting easier and I think it is almost eradicated. The turning point was this particular incident and I am very grateful to my colleague for her help and assistance. *by Roxy*

**If adults are to make informed observations of children, they should recognise their own beliefs, assumptions and attitudes and the influence these will have on the children.**

Te Whaariki

# My Mysterious Hands

By Guida

A few weeks ago in the infants room we moved the furniture around. Now the dining table is under the window and catches the late morning sun. This change had a few consequences, and one I could not have anticipated- when I am feeding a baby on the couch, they couldn't see the other babies eating at the table without having to turn their head right around. This was

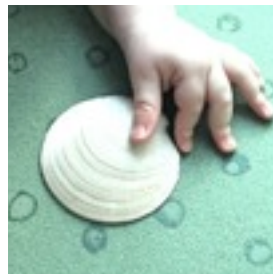


too distracting, so I began sitting with the baby on my lap facing towards the window and the other babies. If they want to, they can look at each other – a much more social

and pleasant experience. However, I then needed to use my other hand for feeding (my non-dominant hand) making the



movement quite awkward for me! I suddenly gained great insight into the babies' own feeding of themselves when they are learning to use a spoon! (more about this later)



Around the same time, a parent asked me about babies' handedness – at what age does it begin to show whether they will be left or right handed. So I revisited a couple of old books of mine – *Hands* by **John Napier** and *The Hand – How its use shapes the brain, language and human culture* by **Frank Wilson**. There was nothing to indicate when handedness emerges, but Wilson does summarise studies which differentiate between hand-type tasks like writing, and whole body tasks like throwing, and states that for many people the dominant side can change according to the activity.

Wilson also discusses a theory that the hands work together in a partnership, and that their movements differ from but support each other. These differing activities are linked to the temporal-spatial scale (time and space). He sums this up by saying “the left hand knows what the right hand is planning, and the right

hand knows what the left hand just did”. (reverse the order to apply this to a left hander).

In practicing the RIE philosophy we expect that infants be free to manipulate objects and toys while lying on their back. This very important phase allows them to easily pass the objects from one hand to the other. By being on their back, their fingers, thumbs, wrists, elbows and shoulders can be fully engaged in the movements – twisting, rotating, releasing, gripping and so on. Perhaps it also lets them discover their own handedness!

While looking for more information about handedness, I found in Wilson's book discussion about the two different hand grips humans use and these were identified in 1956 by Napier who was a world renowned hand physician. I reflected on our infants feeding themselves. When they are manipulating the spoon to feed themselves it brings into play one of the two hand grips humans use. It is the power grip (like holding a hammer, where the object is grasped against the palm). The second is the precision grip (like holding a pen to write). According to Napier ***“The gripping posture ... is a highly precise registration of neurologic preparations for the biomechanical requirements of the task”***. Phew!! The babies are doing all that! Their hands are doing what the brain wants - in this case feeding themselves, and in the process, learning how to use a tool.

Reading minded important slow during giving eating, so the learning can happen peacefully and with respect.



this reminds me how it is to do this care-time of and feed- that the

*References: Napier, J. (1980). Hands. New York: Pantheon Books.*

*Wilson, F.W. (1999). The Hand. How it use shapes the brain, language, and human culture. New York: Vintage Books.*

Often the hands will solve a mystery that the intellect has struggled with in vain.

Carl Jung

# Terrific Toddler Triumph

By Elena

I was watching our toddlers climb the beloved A-frame marvelling at how they moved and I do mean marvelling. I have recently completed my RIE Fundamentals course during which we studied and observed infant/ toddler gross and fine motor development. To cement our appreciation of just how magical this unfolding development is, we were tasked with the arduous job of trying to move like our infants and toddlers! We forget how much thought and coordination is required to just crawl, roll over, sit and then stand especially since these moves are have so inherently become part of our subconscious actions as adults. The RIE course reminded me of this – that *it's hard work learning to walk let alone climb...*

I watch with soft eyes how our toddlers tend to start off cautiously, especially if it's their first encounter with the A-frame. Lina, a relatively new toddler stood staring at the top of the climbing frame as if she was judging the height. To us adults, it might be a knee high endeavour but, at first, to our toddlers it may as well be Everest. With each climb they hold onto a bar with both hands, pulling up on one foot or knee. Then they have to bring up a second foot or knee to the same level as the first until they've reached the top. Once at the top then they have to make a decision of whether to climb down or swing that leg over. But wait, it does not stop there as to come down they have to repeat the process in reverse!

These amazing children barely understand the concepts of top, bottom, or up and over and yet how often do we stand at the side lines giving instructions without considering if our toddlers truly understand "*climb up*", "*swing over*", "*move down*"....Children learn to associate



the words only once they have experienced or visualised an action or object. After all how does a child associate the word 'banana' with the actual object? Typically we offer them a banana and if we repeat this process often enough they will soon associate the word with the object. In this way they learn that images can represent everyday objects and actions they encounter.

What does all of this have to do with climbing? Well, the next time you're at the park rather than pop your child at the top of the slide, let him/her try to climb to the top in their own unique way. Left to their own devices we see that their strategies may include climbing up the slide before tackling the rungs that are typically designed for young children rather than toddlers. *In this way our children learn about persistence, a valuable life skill.* The thrill is not only in the slide down but in the journey to the top and then the sheer exhilaration of having succeeded. Along the way they learn about how their bodies move in space and gain confidence in and control of their bodies let alone the gross and fine motor benefits. More importantly are the safety aspects involved. Does this scenario sound familiar? Your toddler has climbed up onto a piece of furniture or an and instead of allowing them to climb down we hold our hands up and wait for them to jump. Now I know we are often (mis)guided by their infectious and beaming smiles into doing this we may



actually do them a disservice. Toddlers start to expect that this is a norm that whenever they stand up high there will be a willing adult nearby to ‘save’ them. Unfortunately this is not a realistic expectation and it just takes an instant for an accident to happen. Yes, tumbling and stumbling is part of learning how to climb but is it not more appropriate to give this control over to the child. In learning how to climb up and down toddlers are learning strategies for exploring and making sense of the world by using their bodies. These strategies include judgement calls about safety based on what they feel capable and confident of as a result of having to think about where, when and how to position their bodies.



of his/her own body. Pikler understood the myriad of positive outcomes of Free Movement when she said:



*Ultimately climbing and other forms of outdoor play help children understand mathematical concepts of distance and spatial awareness such as height, size, position and space.* They do this as they learn about what they can and cannot do. By positioning our toddlers in places that we feel they might enjoy, rather than allowing and trusting them to find their own way, we minimize the opportunity for cognitive learning and physical development and safety.

We see our role as adults, is to sit close by not interfering in their play. Instead we can support them with patience and soft words of encouragement if necessary. After all as **Emmi Pikler** said *“As a matter of principle, we refrain from teaching skills and activities which, under suitable conditions, will evolve through the child's own initiative and independent activity.”*

A key principle of the RIE philosophy is that if we respect a child we will never place them in positions which they cannot get into by themselves. The reason for this is that they become trapped – and no longer free in their movement. In essence – a baby becomes a prisoner

*“Whilst learning to turn on the belly, to roll, creep, sit, stand and walk, (the baby) is not only learning those movements but also how to learn. He learns to do something on his own, to be interested, to try out, to experiment. He learns to overcome difficulties. He comes to know the joy and satisfaction which is derived from this success, the result of his patience and persistence.”*



# Strategies For Coping With Change

by Kelly

As some of you will know I have had a lot of change in my life both personally and professionally recently, most noticeable is that I have moved from being the Mamaku teacher to now being the Kowhai teacher replacing Brigitte after her departure to Wellington.

Although the change is positive with people, routines and places changing it can still be temporarily unsettling and this started to get me thinking about how our children deal with change and how we can support them. It is said that the only constant is change and for our Mamaku children this can at times seem especially true. Often two year olds are compared with teenagers because of the new emotions and responsibilities that they are expected to face, their body is changing at an alarming rate, sleep patterns change, they are stuck between wanting increasing independence while still wanting the comfort of what they know and they have to learn to get along with so many other different individuals. Add to this the changes often seen in this age group such as a new baby, moving house, getting used to a new bed and moving downstairs to the Mamaku group often for increased hours its no wonder that this can be a stressful and testing time both for the parents and the children. You may also be beginning to understand why your little one is testing the boundaries so much and why they're emotions are all over the place.

So as a result of all of this I consider what the best ways are to support our children through the obstacles of change as well as taking note of what change means for a child.

1. Often what may be regarded as ***a small change in our lives is often quite significant for our children*** who, not having been in this world long, haven't had many opportunities to experience change and therefore don't have the security to know that things will be okay once the change has resolved itself.

2. Understand that ***regardless of what you have, or haven't, said to your child, they will and do pick up on your every emotion*** and action so don't need to know that a change is coming in order to sense it. Therefore if your face is stuck in false happy mode but your body language screams tension and anxiety your child will think that they have a reason to be anxious.

This is part of the reason that we encourage swift drop offs that are acknowledged as they show your child that while you care there is nothing they have to worry about.

3. Since your child already knows about the change the best thing that you can do is ***talk to them about it...LOTS***. Talking about the change with your child helps them to gain an understanding of what is happening and gives them the opportunity to ask questions about things that might be worrying them. Particularly

where the children are younger give them ***as much visual information*** as you can and allow them lots of time to experience it.

4. Where possible ***make changes in small stages*** so that its easier for your child to digest and isn't too much information to take in one go overwhelming them. Also ***involve them so that they feel that they are part of the process*** and the change.

5. Where big changes are occurring it helps to get a sense of consistency if ***all other routines are kept as normal as possible, boundaries remain firm*** and that there is always something familiar made available to the child like a much loved toy.

6. Remember that ***whatever your reaction to a change, your child may view it very differently***. We often find that while a move downstairs may be exciting for the child its the parents that are nervous or while you are excited about the new baby or house your child may be fearing being replaced or being left behind.

7. All change brings differing emotions all of which need ***time to digest***. So think that while you might need a break from changes, your child needs it even more. So don't forget to take time out with your child either in small breaks, a holiday away or even just some much needed one on one with no distractions. This is particularly important to show the child that you value them more than ever despite the new baby or the extra amount of time that you've spent at work recently.

8. If you are aware of changes that will be affecting your child please ***let us know so that we can support them*** as best as we can and support you by making those connections between home and centre especially when your child may talk to us about what is happening. Also if you ***do notice obvious changes in behavior*** don't ignore them or write them off because often this is your child's only way of communicating with you and may signal stress, that they are getting sick or just needing a break in general.

So as I sign off my last Mamaku newsletter I am excited about the changes ahead but leave with a very heavy heart about passing my Mamaku children on. I am however grateful to be passing them onto such an amazing new teacher. I wish Nikki a big welcome to our TLC whanau, I have no doubts that she will be making amazing contributions to the centre and our team. To all my Mamaku children, parents, and of course Josie, thank you for all being amazing, teaching me heaps and don't worry I'll make sure I'll be seeing you all often :).

**Note: At age 2 years, a child has been on this planet for only 730 days.**

Life is  
Change.  
Growth is  
optional.  
Choose  
wisely.

Karen Kaiser  
Clark

# Coffee Notes From Wellington



Kia ora TLC whanau! Here I am typing this piece on my 3rd day as full pledged Wellingtonian, sipping on my yummy soy mochaccino at this fabulous café called Koffee Eis along Oriental Bay. It's a beautiful sunny morning and as everyone knows, nothing beats Wellington on a fine day!

By the time you read this, it would have been a week since I last saw you all – or two weeks, depends when Marie's sending this newsletter out (Peace Marie!) – and I have to say, I MISS EACH AND EVERYONE OF YOU. I particularly miss my Kowhai and Tui children (yes, MY Kowhai and Tui children! J). I miss TLC.

As I sip on my mocha and watch everyone hurry along their day, it made me reflect on things that I learned from my time at TLC. True to TLC's core values based on the RIE philosophy, slowing down and enjoying the moment is very vital. It is at TLC where I truly learned to slow down and appreciate every little thing that life presents. Watching all these people rush to their destinations (mind you, it is 9.30am!) made me think how they are all missing out on the beauty that is Oriental Bay. I learned that it is very important to stop, if not pause, for a moment and take in life as it is, otherwise, you'll wonder where the day, even the years has gone. Children taught me this.

I remember sitting with a group of Kowhai and Tui children not long ago, looking at the marvel that is a cicada shell. I liked how James, Amelia and Lucia all stopped what they were doing to have a closer look at the cicada. Milla, Lena and Annelise joined in soon after. I remember how they all huddled together on the little deck, taking turns in gently holding the cicada shell, discussing what they should do with it. They agreed to make a house for the cicada shell, in case

the cicada comes back for it.

See, if they were rushing around, even if it was just about a shell, they would have missed out on such an awesome experience where they learned about papatuanuku – the earth mother, through the cicada. They would not have had the opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion with friends and exchange thoughts and ideas on ways to care for the cicada. They would have completely missed out on learning about the wonder that is a cicada.

I have nothing but complete respect and admiration for your children. They are the best teachers and the things I learned from them are things that I could never learn from university. Children taught me curiosity, appreciation, love and care. They taught me perseverance, determination, focus and courage. I learned about friendship, authenticity and sincerity. All these I genuinely learned from working with children.

As I sit here in Oriental Bay watching the hour go by, I feel nothing but utmost pleasure from having had the opportunity of working with you and your child/ren. And I well and truly miss all the TLC children (and the TLC 'adults' too!) I'm going on my next adventure filled with wonderful memories and meaningful lessons learnt.

I've just finished my coffee, and I guess my piece now comes to an end. As cliché as it sounds, this isn't goodbye. It'll just be, see you later! I fully intend to stay in touch with my TLC family. Family is where the heart is, and TLC will always be in my heart.

On a more casual note, you rock! And Wellington's awesome.

Keep in touch!

Aroha Nui.

Brigitte Ofrasio ([brigitteofrasio@gmail.com](mailto:brigitteofrasio@gmail.com))



**“Always remember to slow down in life; live, breathe, and learn; take a look around you whenever you have time and never forget everything and every person that has the least place within your heart.”**

Anonymous



I am, indeed a king, because I know how to rule myself.

Pietro Aretino

## Self-control- How Important is It? by Robyn



In January this year the most recent results of the Dunedin longitudinal study were published. This caught my eye. I was fascinated to read about the multidiscipline study of 1,037 babies born in Dunedin during 1972/73. The study members have been followed up since birth, at age 3, then every year to age 15, at age 18, and 32 and just last year at age 38. ***According to their latest findings the Dunedin study showed that young children's self-control skills predict their health, wealth and criminal history in later life regardless of IQ or social background.***

Their research singles out children's self-control as a clear target for prevention, apart from all other influential features of children's background, such as their family life, socio-economic studies or the child's intelligence. I delved a little deeper to discover the self-control skills measured in the study were conscientiousness, self discipline, perseverance, impulsivity (the control of impulses), delayed gratification and modulate emotional expression.

My thoughts shifted to our programme at TLC. ***Are we providing a programme that supports the development of these skills?*** How

can we work together as a community of learners to increase self-control in our 3-5 year olds? I thought about our developing culture of respect -respect for ourself, each other and the environment. I remembered a strategy we use with the children to help them through disappointment- ***"sometimes you get what you want sometimes you don't, but you can ask for what you want"***. I smiled as I recalled the look on the

children's faces when they understood that adults don't always get what they want either!

For some time now the development of dispositions (alongside skills and knowledge) has been the focus in education. I reflected on whether we were developing perseverance. Watching a child struggle with a task is often difficult for us as adults. Our urge to step in and help is so strong but if we can learn to sit on our hands more when the urge is strongest, our children will be given the opportunity to persevere.

What about delayed gratification? (a poor outcome in this area can lead to difficulty with credit card and money management!) I remember hearing Nigel Latte suggest one way of teaching this skill would be to offer one treat now or two in say three hours later. (I wondered how I would do if it was chocolate) The words of a parent speaking to their child echoed in my ears ***"It doesn't***



***work like that, you can't have a treat from the shops every day"***.

Te Whaariki our ECE curriculum expresses the desired outcomes of acceptable behaviour. This, coupled with the culture of respect it becomes unacceptable to snatch from another or to destroy another's creation. Learning to control those impulses is a vital part of self-control.

***Magda Gerber's Educaring Approach supports the development of self-discipline beautifully by encouraging children at a young age to listen to their bodies, to feel their strong emotions and learn ways to handle those emotions to keep themselves and others safe.***

I felt encouraged, we were on the right track at TLC but I know there is room to work together to strengthen the development of our children's self-control. ***The Dunedin study pointed out that children whose self-control increased with age tended to have better adult outcomes than initially predicted, showing that self-control can change and with desirable outcomes. Therefore every effort we make to foster self-control in our children will have huge benefits for them both now and in their adult life.***

For information on the Dunedin Study visit <http://dunedinstudy.otago.co.nz>



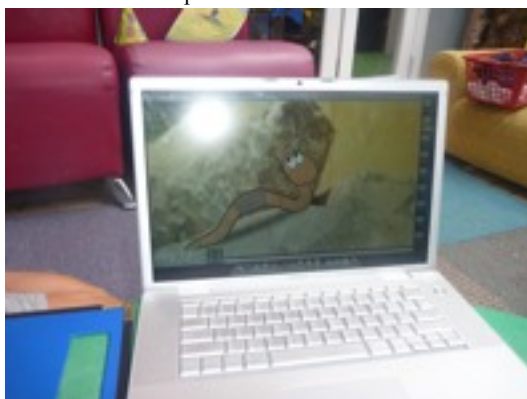
We are all worms, but I do believe that I am a glow worm.

Winston Churchill

# Those Wiggly Worms by Zoe

The worm farm has become a new and ongoing interest lately at The Learning Centre and an extension from our garden interest. This started when we discovered that the worm farm we have was not working. After some investigation from the Tui children and much discussion it was decided that we should revamp our worm farm. Most of the children didn't really understand the concept of a worm farm when we started, however, now we do!

I found a DVD at my university all about worms and how to set up a worm farm.



We watched this together over a series of weeks and learnt so much. The children really liked the little worm on the DVD.

Using the DVD as a resource for research was a fun way to gain knowledge and created a lot of excitement and further learning each time we watched it.

Often the children would ask eagerly when I arrived if I had brought the worms in or tell me stories about worm related games. I think this is how I got the name 'Worm Lady'...



After watching our DVD (about a million times!) we have learnt what they like to eat and how they like their homes. We watched on our DVD how the farm was put together as well and how the farm has different layers; one for the worm wees at the bottom, then another for the worms to live in and a lid on top. There was a lot of discussions about worm characteristic, facts and how worms like their environment from the Tui's and together we learnt so so so much!

It was time to get practical, we discussed what we would need for a own farm and the children were confidently able to explain that we needed

cardboard for the first layer...



And then coconut fibre, (luckily Taiki and his Mother brought in two for us to explore). We were able to pull some of the fibre off for our worm farm.



Once we had the first layer ready with the cardboard and coconut fibre, we then were able to meet our new wiggly friends and show them their new home.

The Tui children showed how they can sustain



their interest over a long period of time during the course of this project. They were able to confidently participate in the group discussions and share their knowledge.

Thank you all for being such great participators during our worm farm project children, I'm sure you all will continue this interest into the future as we continue to care for our new wiggly friends.

From the 'Worm Lady'

*Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care  
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath  
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,  
Chief nourisher in life's feast.*

William Shakespeare - Macbeth

## From The Kitchen by Anne



As the children arrive, I hear their teacher ask,

### *“How was their sleep last night?”*

This is usually a good indicator as to what time lunch and their afternoon nap will be needed.

A good night's sleep, waking up refreshed is the ultimate need for parents as well as children, to function effectively and to enjoy their day. So when the children do have a wakeful night and parents miss out on their much needed sleep too, what could be the cause?

Common causes, the child is :

- \*Too hot or too cold
- \*teething
- \*has a blocked nose
- \*a temperature/fever
- \*a bad dream
- \*is constipated
- \*feeling over full or hungry
- \*allergies
- \* has had **too much sugar** during the day and especially in the evening, which causes a sudden drop in blood sugar during the night
- \*Lack of physical activity during the day
- \*not getting enough **calcium** (dark leafy vegetables, milk, hard cheese, tofu, canned sardines, seaweed, yoghurt, figs, sesame seeds, & almonds)
- \*not getting enough **magnesium** (lightly steamed dark leafy vegetables, soya mince, cashew nuts, almonds, wholegrain cereal, shrimps, muesli, okra & rye crispbread)

***Calcium and Magnesium are the mineral duo that work together to calm and relax muscles and nerves.***

Nuts and seeds need to be ground to a fine meal/flour and used in baking or a teaspoon full sprinkled over food, once the child is one to two years old, only if there's no danger of an allergy.

***The first three hours of sleep is when the parasympathetic nervous system is carrying out maintenance, growth and repairs, using the nutrients from the food we eat.***

Other nutrients important for sleep are the **B vitamins** (**B1**; roast pork, peas, wholemeal bread, porridge, oatmeal, Brazil nuts, **B2**;

lamb's liver, yeast extract, vegetable pate, eggs, soft goat cheese, Greek sheep's yoghurt, wheatgerm, Niacin; muesli, lamb's liver, chicken, sardines, salmon, peanuts, wholemeal bread, beef, **B6**; calves' liver, baked potato with the skin on, banana, raw cauliflower, turkey, wholemeal bread, **B12**; liver, duck, scrambled eggs, beef sandwich, soya cheese, vegetarian cheddar cheese, Camembert cheese, yeast extract), consumed during the day.

**Serotonin and the hormone melatonin** (supplied by oats, brown rice, sweet corn, bananas and tomatoes) increase in the evening as part of the sleep/wake cycle. I have given some of the best food sources per nutrient but there are many other foods that supply these valuable nutrients.

***To aid the sleep cycle: A darkened room – A light low GL snack half an hour before bed such as; a glass of milk with half a banana, or a piece of apple, or nut butter or mushroom pate on a piece of wholemeal toast or an oat cake.***

#### **Mushroom Pate**

Melt in a pan over a low heat, 25gr butter, add 2 chopped cloves of garlic and gently cook for 2 minutes. Add 450gr roughly chopped mushrooms and a pinch of salt and cook stirring frequently for 10 minutes, until the juices start to run. Tip into a blender or food processor and process until finely chopped. Either blend in 4 tablespoons of cream fraiche or (3 tablespoons of goat feta for dairy-free option) a handful of breadcrumbs and a handful of chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley. Season to taste with freshly ground nutmeg, lemon juice or apple cider vinegar, adult version salt & pepper. Spread on bread, toast or crackers.

This freezes well for a week in an air-tight container.

There will be no end to the troubles of states, or of humanity itself, till philosophers become kings in this world, or till those we now call kings and rulers really and truly become philosophers, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands.

Plato

The Learning Centre

# FAMILY SPORTS DAY



JOIN US FOR SOME OLD FASHIONED FAMILY FUN & GAMES  
VERMONT STREET RESERVE  
SUNDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 10:30 AM TILL 12:30 PM  
BYO PICNIC LUNCH AND DRINKS (EGG & TOMATO FREE)

## PVC News

The PVC has planned the following Social Events for 2011:

- **APRIL - Family Sports Day**
- **Wed 22nd June - Matariki Fish & Chips Night - 5.00 - 7.00pm all whaanau invited.**
- **Thu 8th September - Art Auction**
- **Thu 15th December - Christmas Party**

The Next PVC meeting will be on Tuesday the 12th of April 7.30pm at TLC.

## TLC Announcements & Notices

### Summer Holiday Closedown

Last day of the year 24th of December.  
Re-opens 10th January.

### Other Dates For Your 2011 Calendar

#### Parent Evenings:

- July - Over two's parent evening
  - August - Under two's parent evening.
- Exact dates and times TBC.

We also plan to carry out more **parent teacher interviews:**

- May - Downstairs Parent Teacher Interviews
- October - Whole Centre Parent Teacher Interviews

### Feedback

Good? Bad? Ugly? Let us know what you think of our newsletter. What do you want more of, what do you want less of? email [Marie@thelearningcentre.co.nz](mailto:Marie@thelearningcentre.co.nz)

## Financial Fact

A family cannot benefit from **both** winz and the 20 HRS ECE funding/subsidy for 3-5 year olds and have to choose which will work out best for them. If choosing winz, this means that they will be charged the 'Downstairs' rates as per the Mamakus.

## RIE Parent Classes

Maureen Perry, New Zealand's a RIE qualified parent infant class teacher is now taking enrolments for classes to be held at TLC on a Saturday morning. **Do you want to learn more about parenting the RIE way?**

Time: 9.30 - 11.30 (Before the first class there is a 1 hour evening orientation session)

Classes are in a series of 8 weekly session at the cost of \$200.00.

Minimum class size 6 maximum class size 8. To enquire/enroll email Maureen Perry at: [babyfirst02@gmail.com](mailto:babyfirst02@gmail.com)

## Poisonous Plants

Do you know what you need to know to keep you children safe from poisonous plants? I only became aware of how little I knew because I had to as TLC's licensee. Now I've produced a visual guide to the plants to avoid for children. You can buy this for \$9.99 at:

<http://poisonous-plants.com>