

Early Education

Volume 49 *Autumn / Winter* 2011

Artist: Stella, 4yrs



Canterbury Earthquakes •

Mindfulness •

Chinese Immigrant Parenting •

Contents

Early Education vol. 49 Autumn / Winter 2011

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Editorial: Standing together on shaky ground Sue Stover and Claire McLachlan	3
Letter from Otautahi Christchurch, April 25, 2011 Alex Gunn	4
Talking about earthquakes (and tsunamis) <i>Morning circles at Arrowsmith Community Preschool</i> Annie Cafe and Sara Boles	5
Loss of Innocence <i>A mother's story</i> Georgia Hunter	10
Early childhood education <i>Community when and where it counts</i> Judith Duncan, Ali Wenger, Jan Dobson, Lyn Foote with teachers from Otago and Southland	12
Mindfulness in early childhood education <i>A position paper</i> Anna Whitehead	21
Book review: Quaky cat – by Diana Noonan and Gavin Bishop Reviewer: Julie Plows	24
Parenting in changing cultural contexts <i>Pondering the 'tiger mother' (Peer reviewed)</i> Karen Guo	25
Book review: Whose culture has capital? <i>Class, culture, migration and mothering</i> by Bin Wu Reviewers: Anne Grey and April Choi	29
Book reviews: Moving beyond beginnings: Music and sand <i>Making music together: Providing musical experiences in early childhood settings</i> by Maureen Woodhams & <i>The world in your sandpit: Understanding sand play in early childhood</i> by Bernard Woodhams Reviewer: Sue Stover	31
Contributors	32

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Covers

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Contributions

Contributions of articles and photos are welcome from the early childhood community. Please keep copies of any contributions as we cannot guarantee to return what is sent. Cover photos need to be 'high resolution'.

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**Next issue: Special feature
Professional development**

Guest Editor: Ann Hatherly

Contributions welcome: Deadline: 1 Sept 2011

Standing together on shaky ground

There's a certain romance that can develop around the idea of 'community'; that 'we all need each other'. It's easy to say, but to know it viscerally often involves experiences we don't choose for ourselves. We discover we need each other when our own efforts fail.

Those who have survived the earthquakes in Christchurch know this need for community viscerally. This issue of *Early Education* tells the stories of those who identify with the early childhood community, not only in Canterbury where the February 22 earthquake caused widespread devastation, but also in the Otago-Southland areas to where thousands of people fled.

We are grateful to our friends and colleagues who could prioritise bringing to us how the earthquake affected them. Lyn Foote and Judith Duncan have connected the earthquake with the wider experiences of disaster and community, as well as co-ordinated the input from early childhood services in Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill.

An oasis for many earthquake-affected families was the tiny Lakes District town of Arrowtown, where early childhood services and the local school swelled in numbers during February and March after the Canterbury earthquakes. We're grateful to Annie Cafe and Nicole Fawcett, two Arrowtown teachers, who organised for us children's conversations, art work and a personal reflection by a parent, Georgina Hunter.

The resourcefulness of Canterbury kindergartens management is evident in the account of how in the aftermath of the earthquakes, kindergarten provision adjusted to match the available spaces. Alex Gunn's letter also reminds us that daily life for those in Christchurch is still a struggle. The new 'normal' demands more effort even for daily amenities (for example, a functioning reliable sewage system). What can we do when we can't undo a disaster? Anna Whitehead's article about mindfulness offers suggestions for how to intentionally focus and to perhaps find choices which would otherwise be blocked by anxiety. Some simple suggestions on how to help children to cope with stress in their daily lives is a timely reminder of how to support children's developing mental health.

This issue is rounded off by two insightful articles also about people moving into new spaces, although the focus here is on how across several generations, Chinese families influence and are in turn influenced by the experience of immigration and the challenges of integration into new

countries. Karen Guo reflects on Chinese parenting, while April Choi and Anne Grey review a New Zealand study of Chinese parents' experiences in early childhood settings. Both contributions give educators considerable food for thought about how they help the children of immigrant families to develop a sense of belonging.

None of these stories are about happy endings. They are stories about adaption – with all that that means in terms of upheaval, distress and possibilities. Such resilience is also evident in how early childhood and its curriculum operate; making meaning from complex lives by connecting with people, places and things. This issue highlights that in the face of significant challenges, social, cultural or geological, such as major earthquakes, how important it is to remember our interconnectedness, even when the stillness of the ground beneath our feet in our own place encourages us to think we fly solo. Our thoughts go to all those children, families, teachers and early childhood communities that continue to cope in the face of considerable adversity. We hope that this issue, although highlighting issues and challenges for early childhood educators, raises awareness in your early childhood setting about current and potential issues for centres, teachers and parents to problem solve.

Arohanui

*Sue Stover and
Claire McLachlan (Editors)*

PS: Our next issue will be focussed on the topical and somewhat thorny issue of professional development of teachers. We are delighted that Ann Hatherly is our guest editor. We invite your stories of how you are promoting professional learning within your early childhood setting. See page 2 for details of how to submit articles to us. Remember also that we are always looking for appealing, high resolution photos for the covers of *Early Education*. Thanks for your ongoing support!

Letter from ... Otautahi Christchurch

Alex Gunn – 25 April 2011

Well, what a few months it's been! I have two entries in my diary for today and unlike most days, neither of them is to be realized. Despite being both Easter Monday and Anzac Day, my workday was to centre on 'satchel packing' and the 'pack-in at the convention centre'. Like quite a few others over these past weeks, this morning has been a sobering one.

As many of you will recognize, this week in April was to be the week of the 10th Early Childhood Convention, *He ihu waka, he ihu whnua* – *Where the canoe touches the land*. The conference was cancelled after the February 22nd earthquake damaged (in some cases irreparably) our venues, our accommodation sites and our city infrastructure. The city cordons still prevent anyone but civil defence, city officials and accredited contractors' access to the areas of town where our early childhood community would have gathered this week. In Christchurch we recognise that all of those associated with the convention, along with the colleagues, employers and friends who were supporting them to attend will too have experienced loss as a consequence of the quake. To you I would like to say, remain strong and steadfast: *kia kaha, kia manawanui koutou*.

Two of our keynote speakers will address different New Zealand early childhood conferences which graciously expanded their programmes to accommodate convention sessions that were unable to run. Dr Margaret Sims will speak at the Early Childhood Council Conference in May and Dr Joce Nuttall will address the Te Tari Puna Ora O Aotearoa New Zealand Childcare Association Conference in July. Therefore some of the quality research, scholarship and professional development opportunities lost from convention will still be seen in 2011. I wish all those who would have given sessions in Christchurch, all the very best for their presentations as and when they occur.

The next convention will be held in 2013 (two years earlier than would have been usual). Te Wananga O Aotearoa is to host the event under the leadership of Elizabeth Pakai. Elizabeth and her team were preparing to pick up the tone from Convention 2011. Their response to the circumstances and the decision to host two years earlier is I think, an exceptional gesture. It recognizes the significance of Convention to the early childhood community of teachers, scholars, policy makers and friends in New Zealand and beyond.

Thank you to everyone who has sent a message or picked up the phone and wished us well. As I wrote in my last 'letter' in September, it may feel like you can't help if you're not here, but I assure you, that quick text or email is encouraging, it seems to

make a difference to increased wellbeing, every day.

On a local level, the early childhood community in Otautahi Christchurch has demonstrated much resilience. Some centres were within a week, ready and willing to reopen worksites for staff and to restore services to families. Recognising that the provision of quality education and care for children and families would provide critical support as communities acquainted themselves with life post-quake, owners, organizations and officials worked quickly and decisively to certify premises and restart programmes as they were able. Many teachers prevented from going to work themselves ended up volunteering in community shelters and in suburbs, and some early childhood centres made themselves available, outside of normal operating hours (or before they were able to offer education and care programmes) to act as quasi community hubs where staff and families could do washing, share resources, and find community. These tremendous examples of communal effort were a reflection I thought, on the place of the local early childhood organization in its broader community.

Of course, there remain about 25 centres from across the city that are unable to open. Even many of those that are operating now are doing so in safe but broken premises and they will find over the next months, that they face periods of closure or reduced facilities as repair and re-building work is accommodated. It may well be a long winter in the South this year. Many closed services are awaiting engineering and insurance assessments and others find themselves compromised by virtue of being in the central city cordon or within the drop-zones of at-risk buildings. For them, a much longer-term solution for the restoration of programmes and services needs to be found. Unlike the schools sector, it's not as easy to site share in early childhood education.

So, even though many of us in Christchurch are still suffering *quake brain* and being rattled by aftershocks on a fairly regular basis, it is getting easier to remain on task and to plan ahead. We know that there is a lot to concern ourselves with on the national scene as we head into the general election cycle later in the year. As we rebuild in Christchurch, we hope our friends and colleagues from around the country will forgive us our absences if we're prevented from being as fully involved as normal, but at the same time, we'd appreciate you still expecting us to front up to business as and when we're able.

Hopefully next time I have the chance to send a letter from Otautahi Christchurch the circumstances will be unremarkable. Until then, take care.

Talking about earthquakes (and tsunamis)

Morning circles at Arrows-town Community Preschool

Annie Cafe and Sara Boles

At Arrows-town Community Preschool, we have heard a lot about earthquakes in the past six months. Immediately after the September 2010 Canterbury earthquake the stories began but none of us had actually been in that earthquake. After the February earthquake, however we welcomed at least five children into our centre who had experienced the earthquake. They had arrived in our community, some to stay for only a matter of days, some for a week, and some permanently. We heard children talking about the earthquakes among themselves, and also had group discussions. We supported earthquake play through experiences such as expression and communicating our ideas and feelings through the language of drawing. There has also been a lot of child-initiated play involving earthquake-related ideas such as building blocks and making sense of what happens when they fall down, glue gun creations building houses 'stable' enough to withstand earthquakes. Also hospital/doctor role play and dramatic play involving patients and looking after injured people.

We regularly (each term) practice our earthquake procedure, so we know what we would do at Pre-School in the event of an earthquake. This involves practicing 'turtle safe' and getting under tables etc. (see Jack's drawing on page 7 of him and his sister Alaska practicing turtle safe). This is always important to be practicing, but since the earthquakes it has become more close to home and the children are taking it very seriously, making sure everyone is OK and knowing where everybody is. We have heard from some parents that children are mentioning at home how to be "turtle safe!" in an earthquake, and what you need to do in an earthquake which is fantastic to see the learning is meaningful and being shared at home too. Recently there has even been spontaneous earthquake practices initiated by children during their play or role playing, which is interesting to observe and see the knowledge being embedded within their play.

At our morning circle we regularly record what children

share. In the month following the February earthquake we learned a lot about how children understood earthquakes and their working theories about them and then about tsunamis after the devastation in Japan. But of course it began earlier than that:

Monday 6th September 2010

Bethany: There was a earthquake. I saw it on the TV.

Lola: Grandad was in bed with Joy the dog and he looked out the window but he has not electricity so he had to cook porridge on the fire.

Harrison: All of the houses broke and the roads had cracks and the airport was closed. They just were checking the wheels might go in the holes when they're blasting off.

Connor: My Grandma's house was shaking.

Jamie: All the road cracked and our house broke. And it shaken and a little bit broke off.

Josh: The army came; don't know how they'll help.

Lochie: When the crack was in the road and kids were playing in it. It's not safe, it might get bigger. The army came and they put their walkie talkies in a box.

Hugo: There was lots of stuff falling down.

Annie (teacher): Did anybody feel the earthquake here in Arrows-town?

Luna: My bed was shaking, my cushion fell off.

Jessie: I was in Christchurch before the earthquake!

Jack: There's also the ground opening up into pieces. All of the things just fall into the hole.

Eli: Our friends came over to our house. They're 3 and 5.

Meg: There was an earthquake when I was a baby and my cot banged against the wall.

The Bricks fell through the chimney and broke my lego. We moved to Arrowtown now, I don't like the house but I like the toys.

James, 4 years



Simon: One day I feeled the earthquake at my house and we all got out and no one died. And in the weekend the earthquake stopped.

Annie (teacher): Does anybody know how earthquakes happen?

Jack: The plates in the ground.

Lochie: The earth shakes, so the planets shake out in space.

Josh: The planets got all wiggle and the earth was moving.

Lochie: There was a little earthquake on Gibbston Highway.

Lola: The earth shakes in Arrowtown.

Jack: There are plates underground and they start off flat and then the earthquake happens then they go up and the houses go down.

Lochie: I know. You might choke if something falls on you.

Harrison: It'd be good if I had my helmet on.

Tuesday 7th September 2010

Annie (teacher): Do you remember talking about the earthquake yesterday?

Harrison: Yeah the roads cracked! And no power.

Eliana: Everything was shaking, I saw it on TV.

Kate: I heard about the earthquake in Christchurch on TV too.

Lola: Shaking ground everywhere.

Annie (teacher): Did it shake everywhere though, or just in New Zealand?

Lochie: Nah. Earthquakes only shake at one place at a time.

Josh: The earth is moving.

Annie (teacher): So why do earthquakes happen?

Simon: When the plate collapses together the grounds go up and down.

(We had a look at where the fault lines are on a map of New Zealand, between the Pacific and the Australian Plate.)

Jamie: The plates are shaking so the houses.

Connor: The planets go round and round and shakes the ground.

Eliana: The ground was shaking, that's why my bed was shaking.

Grace: I slept through the earthquake.

Lola: After the big Earthquake little ones come.

Jack, 4 yrs



Annie: Do you know what they're called?Aftershocks.

Kylie: What are they doing in Christchurch now?

Lola: They need to fix it.

Eliana: Fix some car.

Bethany: They are putting things back.

Kylie: The army is helping.

Harrison: They are getting all the concrete off the ground.

Lochie: Knocking building down to build new ones. People are coming from the North Island to help.

Wednesday 23 February 2011

Jessie: Christchurch earthquake! Nicole's puppy ran away coz it was scared.

Bethy: The lady was stuck.

Lola: There was a dead person with blood all over his hands.

Connor: My grandma died in a earthquake coz she was tryin to help some people.

Cameron: People died.

Meg: All the windows got smashed inside.

Holly: There was a person that had blood all over her face.

Eli: Hugo was there but they got out in the car and they quickly got home.

Grace B: I know about the earthquake I know that my Mummy was actually there when the earthquake happened. She got home last night, she was so scared.

Eli: Did you feel a little earthquake in Arrowtown yesterday? It wasn't the same one, it was a little one.

Lydia: We see about it on tv we did.

Grace B: Um, I know that it was humungous and I know that um I know that people died and I know that people got crushed. Some people got crushed in buildings.

Connor: Some people got hurt and some of them died.

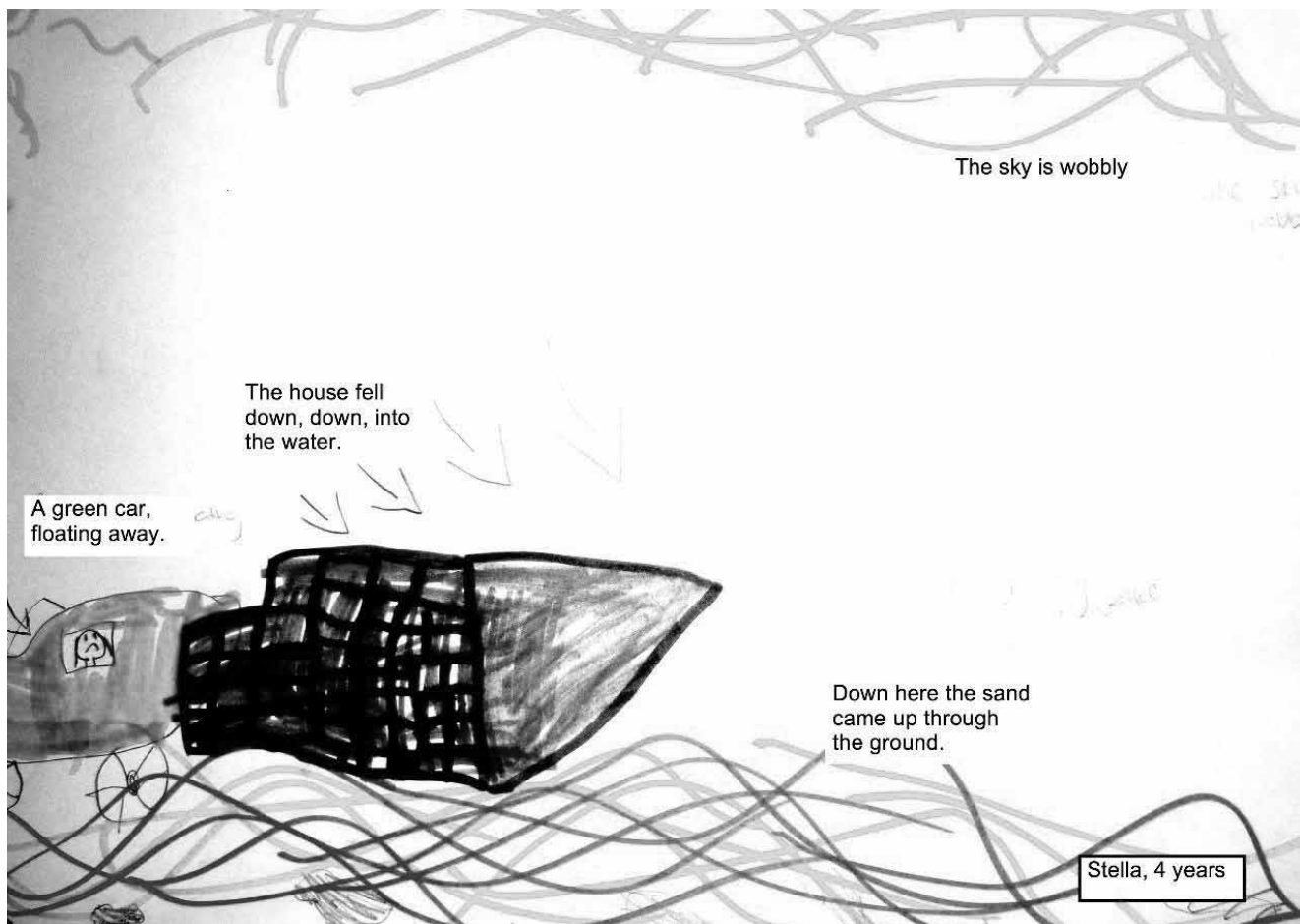
Eli: Hugo didn't die, coz he's my friend and they got out and he's Kaiya's best friend. Hugo Allen.

Connor: All the buildings fall down they did.

Grace: Some of the lakes and rivers are flooded from the earthquake.

Eli: Can we watch the world shaking. Oh yeah, yeah that's what we saw. The people will be feeling shakyish.

Grace: I know lots about what happened in Christchurch in the earthquake. They ran out of ambulances coz lots of people were hurt.



Tuesday 8th March 2011

Jack S.: There was an earthquake there.

Lola: There's been a really big big earthquake under the ground.

Bridget: That's where Uncle Mark lives.

Jack: The buildings fell down.

Cameron: Some people got trapped in the bus and they died.

Bethany: Some had blood on them. They're still alive in the building.

Eli: Some people died and we are going to put the money on the concrete.

Jack: There are some firemans there to put out the fire in the building. Police there too.

Ted: There was a doctor like my mum and one of the buildings fell down.

Jade: We need some builders to build it up again.

Ted: It's gunna look different.

Max: I'm gunna be a builder.

Wednesday 23rd March 2011

Kosta: You could hide under the table! Coz things will bang on a table in an earthquake.

Toby: Turtle safe.

Thursday 24th March 2011

Hugh: If there's a earthquake we need to be like this! When the earthquake was happening I was in Christchurch and I got a little scratch.

Jack: Well I was watching TV and there was a huge tsunami in Christchurch. The huge tsunami ripped over the houses and the buildings fell and trapped everyone.

Annie (teacher): Are you sure that was in Christchurch?

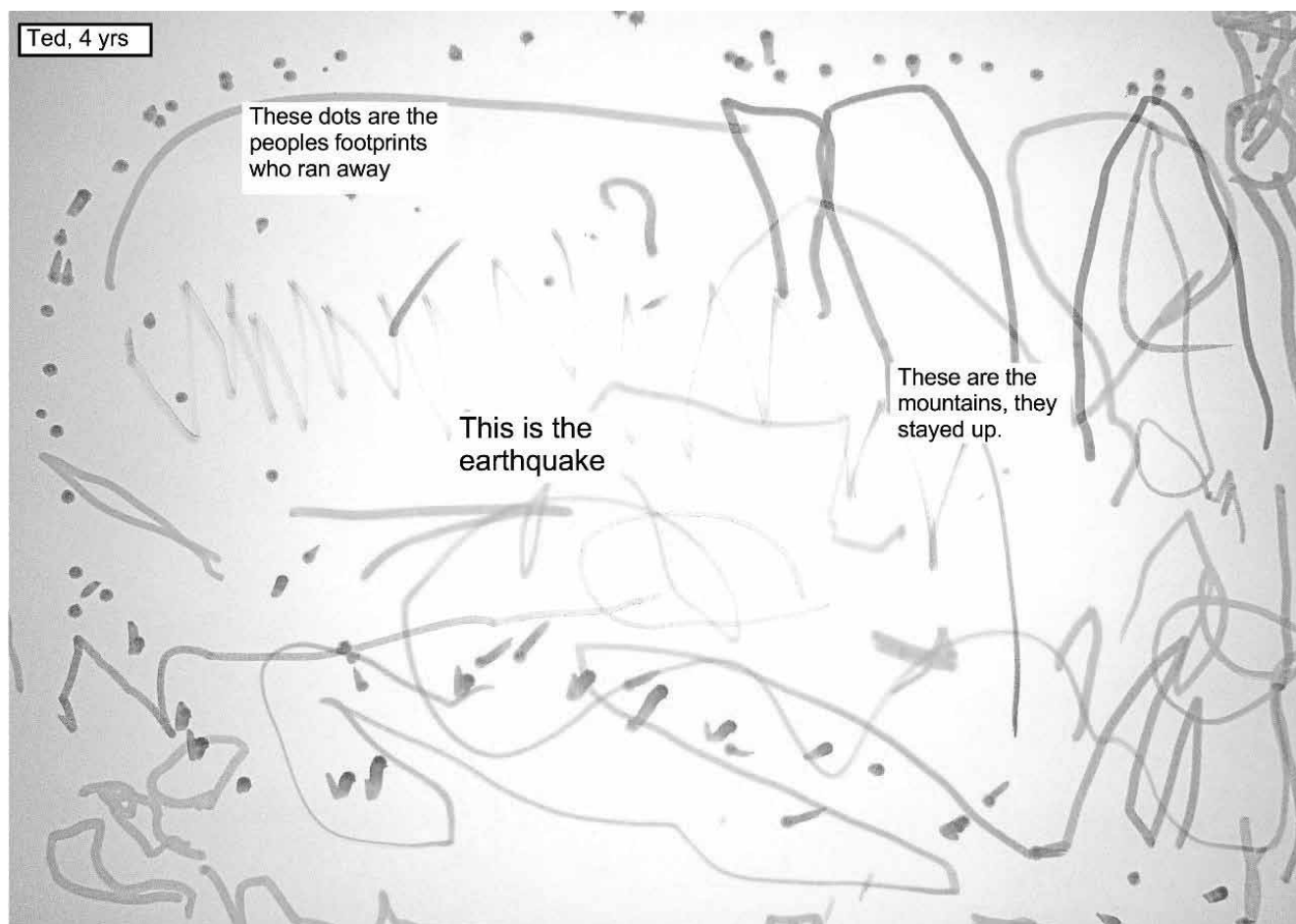
Jack: Oh, no it was in Japan.

Annie (teacher): Mm. Do you know why there was a tsunami?

Jack S: Tsunamis happen in earthquakes. When there is a flood the water pushes all the water over the houses and even the cars.

Stella: Tsunamis are big waves and are really hard.

Jack S: When you kick in the pool you can make waves.



Maggie: I know how tsunamis happen. The waves are really big and cover the whole city.

Bridget: There is a white box with things in it at home, for in case of an earthquake. It's in the garage. It's got food in case we get hungry and a green tent to sleep in.

James: The food fell down in the earthquake and my plane broke. The food from the cupboards and the cupboards break. And now we live in a new house, now we've got more food and we've taken it to our new house. Our new house is in Arrowtown. Yup we're gonna go back to Christchurch. But um did you know my other Pre-School is open again, James St. Pre-School.

Postscript from Annie and Sara (teachers)

Reflecting on the children processing trauma, talking about it has been a major part of the process. The children are comfortable and willing to come to us to talk about the earthquake, whether it is their experience from either being there, or having someone they know there, or just wanting to process what they have seen and heard about.

What difference has being in an early childhood environment made? Children are in a place where they feel safe, comfortable and have a sense of belonging. In this environment they can express their thoughts, concerns, fears and working theories with us and other children. As

a teaching team reflecting on this whole experience, we have learned even more about the different ways in which children communicate, think and process experiences. The group as a whole has become more understanding of wider world events, and also of each other; listening to the thoughts and opinions of others, and having a sense empathy towards each other.

From Annie Cafe about the artwork about earthquakes

Communicating through the language of drawing represents how these children have taken in some information about the earthquake, and are now putting it into their own world, how it relates to them, and showing us what it meant to them. I think the silver lining of such a devastating thing to happen is that it is a valuable learning opportunity. Everybody has learnt so much and all the children are fantastic at discussing it and enquiring about it now. There is so much meaningful learning happening when we talk about current events like this as a group. Children develop their ability to understand and deal with traumatic and sudden disasters such as this by talking it out together, being able to ask questions, and share their thoughts/opinions and feelings.

Loss of innocence

A family is changed

Georgia Hunter

As a parent, this is the aspect of my family's earthquake experience that I find the saddest. Whilst I consider us to be incredibly fortunate to all be alive and uninjured, it is the children's 'loss of innocence' and the fact they have had to experience these events – that is hard to deal with.

By 'loss of innocence', I am referring to a child's wonderfully innocent view of the world, where they feel safe, are incredibly trusting and believe that their parents can keep them safe. This is especially true of most children who are fortunate to live in New Zealand, which has, until recently, been thought of a very safe and idyllic place to raise a family. I am incredibly fortunate to have made it to my mid thirties without experiencing any major tragedy or trauma, yet my children at ages 5 and 2 have been through a fairly traumatic event already, and an event which I as a parent had no control over.

During the time of the earthquake, the environment that many children were in was one where they felt safe and protected, i.e. home, school and early education centres, and depending on their experience during the earthquake, many may feel scared and unwilling to return to these environments. For myself and my 2 year old son, this was our home; and for my daughter, it is her school that she still feels frightened of as she had a terrifying experience there.

Due to the nature of this earthquake and its sheer violence, I was unable to stay calm and act in a reassuring way for my son. We were literally scrambling to find safety whilst dodging falling furniture, exploding windows and everything breaking around us. After the earthquake, my son then had to view a side of Mummy he had not previously seen either, and that was me running out onto the street calling for help from neighbours. I had to get my daughter from school but our car was trapped and I had no way of doing this apart from getting someone to take us. A wonderful neighbour came to our rescue and drove us to the school which took a long time given the state of the roads and traffic.

On the way, my son sitting on my knee, felt and heard my physical anxiety as I contemplated my daughter's fate at school knowing that she would have been under the

cliff eating her lunch at the time of the earthquake. He has never been exposed to this level of anxiety and panic from me and this, combined with the sights he was seeing around him, I believe led to a very heightened sense of anxiety in him also.

I know that this is something that has affected my son: his feeling of safety and my ability to provide it. It is something that I felt terrible about, but now realise, I simply did not have a choice. In the first three weeks after the earthquake my son had numerous nightmares each night where he was reliving this sequence of events we experienced in the earthquake, saying his windows were breaking and the roof was coming down on him. He also talks about it frequently saying things like, 'Our house is broken. We fell off my bed. You fell on my Mummy. Windows broken.' After seeing a counsellor about my son, he has made enormous improvements and the nightmares have thankfully stopped.

I guess what this means for early childhood teachers to be aware of is that some children have not only been through a traumatic experience of the earthquake itself, but the things they once considered to be safe (for example, their home), became unsafe and the people they once relied on to provide safety were not able to do that on this day. As it did with my son and daughter, this new realisation that their world is no longer safe will present itself in many varied ways and may take some time to heal.

Safety for us as a family now means staying alive. Previously, my notion of safety really focused on protecting my children from cuts, accidents and broken bones. Now, when I think of keeping safe, I think of survival. Even though we are not back in Christchurch yet, each night my husband and I check the torches are where they should be and the pathways in and out of each bedroom are clear. We also have a plan of who will get which child and where we plan to go as a safe place in the house. Instead of now just looking for potential climbing, traffic or choking hazards, new environments are checked for potential safe spots and a way out in the event of an earthquake.

After the 7.1 earthquake in September 2010, we only did this for a couple of weeks as I think we each felt that

during this first event, we had retrieved our children without too much difficulty and found a safe place in our home. The experience on the 22nd February 2011 was completely different. Firstly, I could not stand, let alone run to a safe place and secondly, nowhere in our house was actually safe, added to that, people lost their lives in this earthquake.

When we do return to Christchurch, we will have to decide if we feel the barrier erected at the back of my daughter's school is safe enough to prevent boulders and the cliff positioned behind her playground from falling on the school grounds. This is certainly a different aspect of the safety issues than what I looked at when she started there; namely, the safest place for us to cross the road to school and a brief look at the adventure playground.

One of the things a counsellor and I discussed was the notion of not being able to tell your child that they are safe. We cannot promise this, which parents in Christchurch now realise, and children do take this promise literally. The counsellor gave me excellent advice that rather than saying to children that they are safe, you can instead say that 'Mummy and daddy are working really hard to make sure we are as safe as we can be.'

I have been using this with both my children and it



is something they do find reassuring. As a parent, it is something I am also very comfortable in saying as it is the complete honest truth, and I can believe in it too.

Alice Hunter remembers the earthquake.

Alice painted a picture about her experience as a five year old at Redcliffs School in Christchurch. As well as the presence of the sun and the sky, Alice's picture (above) consists of two small people in the front (painted black); a picnic table to the left (painted black), Redcliffs School with windows and a red inverted 'arrow' on the top; and the cliff behind the school which crumbled in the earthquake (painted in red/orange and black).

Alice talked about the painting to her teacher Nicole Fawcett at Arrowtown School, where her family enrolled her after the first Christchurch.

Alice: That's me running away from the earthquake with Mrs Thompson, and we ran to the front.

Nicole (teacher): What else is in the picture?

Alice: That's our building and the picnic table and the cliff, I repainted it because it was all funny.

Nicole (teacher): What's the orange?

Alice: Um. That means... that's sort of... smoke. The dust. The red that means that they're coming this way. And I did an arrow that they came that way.

For an aerial view of Redcliff school and the presence of the collapsing cliff, see http://www.nzherald.co.nz/education/news/article.cfm?c_id=35&objectid=10709323

Early Childhood Education

Community when and where it counts

Judith Duncan, Ali Wegner, Jan Dobson, Lyn Foote, with teachers from Otago and Southland.

When at 12.51pm on the 22nd of February 2011 Canterbury citizens began to experience what we thought as another one of the more than 6,000 aftershocks we had experienced since the 4th of September 2010 (7.1 magnitude) earthquake, alarm quickly spread as the quake shook the city, buildings, people, animals, lives and emotions in a way that no other shake had. While the 6.3 (magnitude) rating made the quake 'sound' less fearsome than many, the combination of factors involved in this one quake produced devastating consequences for everyone in Canterbury: that is, where the fault is (under the city), the length of time of the shaking (12 seconds), the 'trampoline' effect it produced (up and down as well as side-to-side), and the impact of gravitation forces twice the normal rate.

No-one in the city and surrounding areas has been untouched – from those who lost loved ones in collapsed buildings, the thousands who have lost homes and work places, to the many thousands who cannot now access community facilities (libraries, swimming pools, halls, places to gather), shopping facilities (including major malls), flush toilets, or travel safely on the roads around the city.

While much of the media coverage of the Christchurch earthquakes has concentrated on the collapse of the centre of the city of Christchurch (both in terms of building and businesses), the damage to our communities and in the suburbs has been extreme with liquefaction, landslides, and the resulting loss of amenities, such as water, power, and sewerage. With the basics for safe healthy living no longer available, and nerves and personal safety threatened, local communities responded to those around them quickly and effectively. This was seen in the immediate post-earthquake hours and days where neighbours immediately turned to each other for help and support. This type of response effort helped to maintain not only residential homes and properties but 'lived communities' – the links, networks and sense of 'belonging' and 'location' that support the social capital of families and maintain resilient and well communities.

Rebecca Solnit (2009), writing about American disasters and the 'extraordinary communities that arise in disaster' (title page), provides a compelling argument that while disasters themselves should never be welcomed, the

opportunities that they create for reconceptualising social relations and meaningful work, plus the windows they present for change at all levels of the human existence are not to be ignored. Discussing a range of disasters from the San Francisco 1906 earthquake to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005, Solnit (2009) argues that people do not act as selfish individuals, prone to violence, mayhem, violence and looting as is supposed, but rather neighbours turn to one another, strangers become rescuers in the streets and buildings and whole populations turn their gaze to help stricken areas.

This response by others in the community after the Christchurch quakes, while the official local and national government attention was elsewhere, was the most significant factor in supporting and restoring families and their lives within the suburbs. Neighbours cranked up barbeques and cooked food for the whole street (using the food from freezers and fridges that would otherwise spoil from lack of power), and boiled water on gas rings for those who had no forms of heating sources. Springs which appeared in the middle of lawns and living rooms were plumbed out to the street with signs advertising the free availability of water (in communities where the water mains had burst and no water was available). The 'student army' as they have come to be known, provided hundreds of youthful volunteers who, with shovels in hand, swept through the suburbs, clearing paths, digging residents out of their homes and properties. All of these responses occurred in the following hours and days of the quakes, prior to any national or governmental response. Such actions were the key to personal survival, reconnection of social relationships, and to provide positive hope.

Rebecca MacFie (2011, pp. 26–27), in discussing the government's response to the earthquakes in Christchurch, compared the national action to those of the organised localised community groups who have been working door-to-door with citizens in the suburbs. She quoted community leaders as they worried that the government was focused on 'fixing potholes and pipes', while the community leaders emphasised that the rebuilding of community should take into account the 'soft infrastructure' that goes beyond the pipes. That is, a community is much more than its bricks and mortar (or steel and concrete).

Solnit (2009) argued that civil society survives after disasters because of its ability to muster creativity and resources to meet challenges, that the power, usually held by the elite, is devolved to the people 'on the ground', and that the localised responses demonstrate how as a people we 'desire connection, participation, altruism, and purposefulness' (p. 306). Elsewhere, Duncan, Bowden and Smith (2005) have argued that early childhood education services are the ideal places for supporting families – family resilience, social capital – and overall community well-being (for further discussion see Citizens Preschool and Nursery, 2008; Duncan, 2009; Duncan et al., 2005, 2006a, 2006b), and in times of crisis, big or small, the importance of the

early childhood centre, within the community, becomes even more obvious.

The following stories demonstrate early childhood community problem solving, post-earthquake, where an emphasis is placed on well-being, belonging, family and community – lived examples of Te Whāriki in action. The stories also demonstrate clear examples of what Solnit (2009) argues is at the heart of all disasters: altruism, mutual aid, responsiveness, willingness for inclusion and aid, strangers becoming friends, new social responsibility and responsiveness, and new creativity possibilities that provide visions for the future.

The story of *New Beginnings*

Jan Dobson, centre manager of New Beginnings, a community-based service in a high needs area of Christchurch, describes their experiences. In her story the important role her centre plays in their community, building and supporting strong whānau, is reflected in her emphasis on strong resilient teachers within the centre, and the support they needed to receive to be a key resource for the community:

I was at home when the earthquake struck Christchurch on February the 22nd and my first thoughts were for my team and the children in their charge. The phones were down so I got in my car and tried to make the ten-minute journey to New Beginnings, however, five minutes down the road I was turned around as access to the bridge had gone. I returned home to wait for contact from my team and it came by text around an hour later. It was with a huge sense of relief that I heard that everyone was fine and that parents were beginning to make their way to pick up their children. I have a very competent team and I knew that they would be following procedure and adapting and managing with common sense as required. We had put some extra resources and thinking in place at the beginning of the year and were very well resourced and prepared.

One of the most valuable resources we have at New Beginnings is the inner resource within my team members of well being which supports an ability to remain calm and to create this around them, and this is what our families walked into when they came to pick up their children. I have heard enormous praise from our parents for our team at New Beginnings, for the manaakitanga care and respect that they as parents received when they walked in the door, as they were comforted and calmed by staff before going to their children, and for the warmth, care and calmness, aroha, that was wrapped around their children while they waited.

New Beginnings is in the eastern suburbs of Christchurch and we are hearing stories now from our families of the harrowing events of that day as they tried to make their way to their children, then home and the close calls for them. One particular story comes to mind. One of our four year-

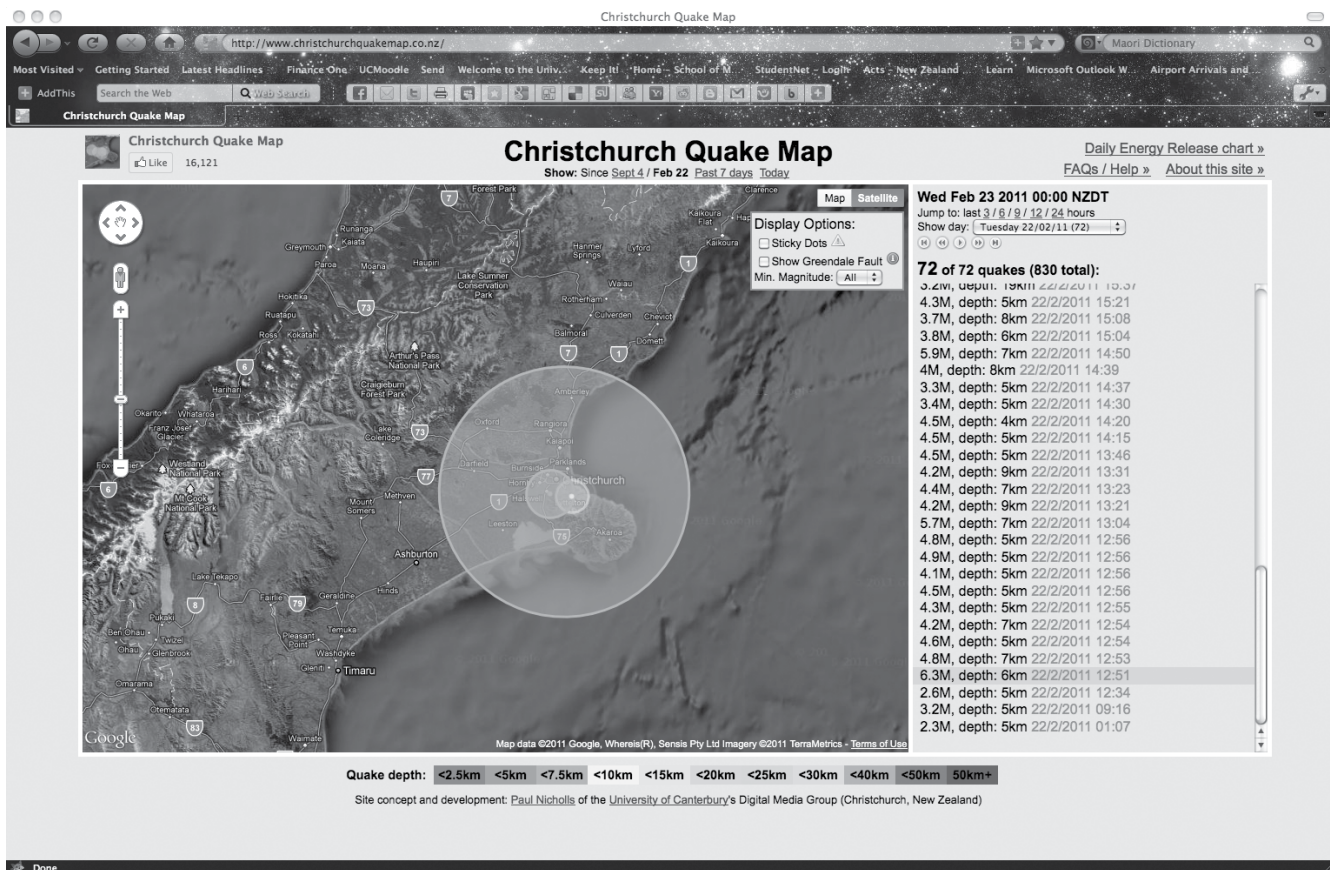
olds was in the CBD in a café when the quake struck and she immediately got under the table, and although scared, remained calm and was able to say to her mother when she got home, 'You would have been so proud of me, Mum!'

There are also stories from our team where teachers have momentarily lost their homes, or are in areas where there is still no sewerage. On the day of the earthquake it took one of my teachers seven hours to get home where it would usually take 20 minutes, and with no cell phone coverage, we became increasingly concerned about her wellbeing and whereabouts. Throughout all of this we have helped each other, supported each other and have continued to be resourceful, resilient and committed to maintaining the well being of our community.

Although our building was not significantly damaged, it has taken five weeks to get clearance to be able to re-open to our families. For the two weeks before we opened we met as a team for two hours each day to re-establish the well-being and kotahitanga unity within our team to then re-create a foundation of well being for our families and children when they returned. During these five weeks we maintained weekly contact with our families for general support and to let them know where we were at and when we might be re-opening.

Our children, families and teachers were all thrilled to be coming back after five weeks, and even though we have experienced some significant aftershocks, everyone has remained resilient, calm and relatively peaceful. I am amazed at the resilience of our families and children. I was preparing myself for the extra pastoral care to our families for quite a few months, and this thinking and preparation will remain in place. However our teachers, families and children are doing well and in writing our story I want to honour and applaud our community for the place in which they are at.

I think that reality is beginning to truly set in for us all in Christchurch as it begins to get colder and the layers of damage and complexity of managing and restoring services are made obvious to us all. The simple things in life, i.e. supermarket shopping are now difficult, and in particular for



our families with no transport and the mall out of action. However, in spite of this there is fortitude and resilience coupled with a positive disposition most of the time.

I do believe that children that have been supported well throughout this experience have gained something very special that they will carry through the rest of their lives... and this is something that cannot be bought or created, it has to be lived.

I was not at work that day... and this has given my team something remarkable that can only be realised through experience. It is the ability to know that in the most extreme

of circumstances that they have the ability to create an environment of manaakitanga and well-being, and that they have an inner strength that was called upon that day that will see them through anything; and they didn't need me. As a leader I believe your job is to empower others to be leaders and this was truly realised that day.

And I finish with a quote from a team member from one of our recent staff meetings: 'We understand each other more and have gained strength and a greater humility. Our relationships are even stronger now and we were able to see how wonderful we all are especially in times of crisis.'

The story of Kidsfirst

Canterbury Westland Kindergarten Association, known as Kidsfirst Kindergartens, was faced with the whole city and Canterbury area to consider, where each suburb, each kindergarten, each centre, required careful consideration and creative decision-making to ensure the safety of all their children and staff, but also to keep communities linked and connected, and ensure access to early childhood education (e.c.e.) continued to be available for as many whānau as possible. *Ali Wegner* describes the events and the creative solutions generated by the September and February earthquakes. This association is the largest ECE service provider in the South Island

and one of the largest services nationwide. It has 59 kindergartens and one education and care centre in Canterbury and three kindergartens in Westland. The association is a not-for-profit enterprise and relies heavily on the government scheme of 20 hours of ECE for every 3- and 4-year-old as its major source of income.

The majority of these 62 kindergartens operate under either a 'sessional' or an 'all-day' license. A sessional license allows for children to attend either a morning or afternoon session of less than four hours in duration. This license requires that there be a ratio of one teacher to every 15

children. The majority of kindergartens in this association have been relicensed to an all-day license and as such can have 'contact hours' with children of more than four hours per day. This license requires a ratio of one teacher to every 10 children. This has huge implications for costs in that, in a sessional setting, the hourly funding received for a group of 30 children must cover the salaries of two teachers for contact hours but, in an all-day setting, the hourly funding for a similar size group of 30 must cover the salaries of three teachers.

The education and care centre operates under an all-day license and is open to children from early morning to late afternoon. Furthermore, it is open for children year-round (during term breaks) and is only closed for a three-week period in the summer. The centre is licensed for providing care for eight children under age 2, and 24 children ages 2 to school entry. As such, staffing is organised differently from kindergartens with a centre manager, an office assistant, team leaders in each of the age groupings, and sufficient teaching staff to comply with legal regulations regarding infant-to-adult and child-to-adult ratios.

Recent disruptions to services

Following the September 2010 earthquake, there was no disruption to the provision of services in the kindergartens or the education and care centre, with the exception of one site located in Kaiapoi, a neighbouring community just north of Christchurch. This kindergarten was severely damaged. After considerable effort to find an alternative location, the kindergarten was moved into the local rugby club rooms. The Ministry of Education assessed the site and worked with the association to ensure that the safety of children could be assured. This location required that once a week, and to accommodate some weekend functions at the club, all kindergarten equipment and materials had to be packed up out of the way.

After the February quake, three kindergartens in Westland were unaffected and continued to operate as usual but 59 kindergartens and one education and care centre in Canterbury were closed. As Civil Defence provided updates and approved reopening of educational institutions, the chief executive of the association [CE] developed a well-designed strategy for reopening its centres. First, kindergartens in the outlying regions of Waimakiriri and Selwyn were inspected for structural damage. Once it was determined that these buildings were safe, staff at these sites were instructed to return to work and take two days to consolidate, contact enrolled families, and prepare for the arrival of children on the third day. Thus, by day eight after the quake, the association had eight of 63 sites back in operation. In comparison to September, however, the local rugby club rooms, which had been the relocated home for the kindergarten destroyed in September, were now not considered safe for children and remained closed.

Next, the property manager and her team systematically travelled from west (least affected areas) to east (most affected areas) to each site to assess structural integrity and

identify needed repairs. Once each site received a 'green sticker' (indicating that the building was safe to enter), the CE instructed the staff as described above. Over the next three weeks, all but eight kindergartens had re-opened for children. These kindergartens had been affected by more serious challenges and called for creative solutions.

Three different plans to re-open kindergartens

Initial attempts to re-open these eight kindergartens focused on finding alternative sites in order to keep the community of learners together. Local schools, community centres, churches, sports clubs, and scout dens were identified and contacted to request rentable space. These efforts were fruitless so different strategies were developed to address the unique situation of each kindergarten. Finding alternative solutions required consideration of several issues: relative location, hours of operation and current enrolments, and license restrictions. Each of these solutions is described below.

Charles St / Vickery St

Charles Street Kindergarten in Kaiapoi (which operates as a sessional kindergarten with a roll of 45 children for five mornings and 30 children for three afternoons per week) was again affected by the second earthquake. The rugby club rooms, which served as their home base following the September quake, were now not structurally safe and no alternative site was available. The CE then looked to the other kindergarten in the area. Vickery Street, in response to community needs, operates under an all-day license with a roll of 30 children in the mornings and 20 children in the afternoons, thereby providing the option for children to attend up to six hours per day. However, due to the size of the site, the license for Vickery Street Kindergarten allows up to 40 children to attend at any time. Therefore, the solution for the Charles Street Kindergarten was to add 10 children to the morning roll and 20 children to the afternoon roll. The two permanent teachers from Charles Street were moved over to support the larger group sizes, and maintain existing child-teacher relationships.

Challenges:

- Supporting the integration of a large group of additional children into a pre-existing group all at once.
- Blending two teaching teams with different teaching approaches and routines in one site.
- Ensuring the long-term viability of Charles Street as a separate kindergarten once the restoration or rebuilding of the kindergarten is completed.

Cashmere / Hoon Hay

Cashmere Kindergarten has a very established community profile and the head teacher is a local icon, having held the position for several decades. The site was severely damaged in the February earthquake. All efforts to find an alternative site in or near the vicinity of the kindergarten

were unsuccessful. The next option was to share the site of a nearby kindergarten, which operated for shorter hours. Hoon Hay Kindergarten, which is relatively nearby, is licensed for up to 30 children and is open for 4.5 hours per day (8:45 to 1:15 PM). Discussions with the two teaching teams led to a possible plan for sharing the site. It was agreed that the morning session could be shortened by 15 minutes to 8:45 to 1 PM (for logistical reasons) and having Cashmere staff and children to 'take over' the kindergarten for afternoon sessions from 1:15 to 5:30 PM. Two things had to happen. First, the Ministry of Education had to measure the site to approve an increase to the licensing capacity to 40 children, and second, the idea had to be presented to the Cashmere community to assess the viability of the plan. Both issues were resolved.

Challenges:

- Supporting both teams to collaborate effectively in sharing the work site.
- Providing a platform for having two communities of learners with different teaching approaches and routines in one site to respect one another.
- Ensuring the long-term viability of Cashmere Kindergarten as a separate kindergarten once the restoration or rebuilding of the kindergarten is completed at its home base.

Bassett St / Woolley St / Parklands

A third scenario was encountered for Bassett Street Kindergarten. This kindergarten operates as a 'traditional' sessional kindergarten with 3 teachers and one group of 45 children for five mornings and another group of 45 for three afternoons per week. As with the other kindergartens, a comprehensive and exhaustive search for an alternative site was unsuccessful. The next step was to map the home locations for all enrolled children. This analysis uncovered clusters of children who lived geographically close to three neighbouring kindergartens: Shirley, Queenspark, and Woolley Street Kindergartens.

The current licensing requirements and enrolments at each site were reviewed. Various options were considered of ways to divide up this community and ensure that one teacher moved with each group of children. The nearest kindergarten, Woolley Street Kindergarten, was licensed for 40 children but had groups of 30 and 20 during mornings and afternoons respectively. If the license could be increased, this would mean that there were, in the same site, potentially 20 spaces in the mornings and 30 spaces in the afternoons. This would mean that the Bassett Street community could possibly be divided into two, and not three, groups. Once again, the Ministry was asked to measure the site with a view to increasing licensing capacity to 50. Once approved, the teaching team met with the head teacher from Woolley Street to consider the option of moving twenty morning children to Woolley Street with two Bassett Street teachers. Others would be offered available spaces at Parklands Kindergarten.

Challenges:

- Supporting the integration of a large group of additional children into a pre-existing group all at once.
- Blending two teaching teams with different teaching approaches and routines in one site.
- Ensuring the long-term viability of Bassett Street as a separate kindergarten once the rebuilding of the kindergarten is completed.

Ongoing Challenges

How have these natural disasters affected teaching and learning for approximately 4000 kindergarten children in Canterbury and how can the association assess and meet the needs of children and their whānau? What other supports will be needed over the coming weeks?

With reports of an on-going exodus of families, as aftershocks continue to cause damage, rains flood neighbourhoods that are measurably lower than before the quake, and winter cold approaches for those living in damaged housing, the association faces a considerable decrease in enrolments. Moreover, many businesses are considering their futures in the area and relocation and redundancies will impact on decisions made by parents and caregivers for some time to come. The loss of families, together with imminent cuts in the level of government funding linked to staff credentials, could have a severe impact on the financial stability of the association as it is committed to employing only fully qualified teachers. The future of the sites, mentioned in this writing, is uncertain pending geological assessments of the land. To rebuild or not to rebuild and where will be the questions for the leadership of the association.

These are some of the challenges identified to date and, in its 100th year of operation, the association will be keenly aware of the complexities of this changed context.

**Documentation on pages 17 and 19 courtesy of
Dunedin Early Childhood Centre**



Two Minutes Silence

On Tuesday, One week after the Christchurch earthquake, we joined with the whole of NZ to mark two minutes silence. The children and teachers talked about how this was a ceremony to pay our respects to those who have been killed and injured in the earth quake. And to show our love and support for the people living in Christchurch who are now dealing with the aftermath.

We gathered around a special circle of candles and photos from the news paper reporting the quake. Some parents joined us as we listened along to the radio broadcast from Christchurch. We were very quiet and still during the two minutes of silence. After the ceremony some children helped to blow out the candles.

We felt sad as we remembered what had happened and our prayers and best wishes are with Christchurch as it recovers.

In response to the earth quake the children have been extremely busy providing emergency rescue services to retrieve the injured. The pop culture area has been turned into a hospital/rescue centre with the rescue helicopter on standby and dozens of police, firemen, doctors and nurses working round the clock to attend to patients.

Many of the children are well informed about current events. With having parents who are health professionals it is to be expected that they will be following these events closely. Children are quick to pick up on the interests and concerns that are topical.



Stories from beyond Canterbury

Creative solutions to ensure the well-being of whānau and children also occurred outside of Canterbury, as in the immediate post-earthquake days, thousands of children (with and without their whānau) left Christchurch and headed to different parts of New Zealand. With the co-operation of the Ministry of Education, who provided flexibility around enrolments and funding for this period, early childhood centres (and schools) were able to provide for those Christchurch refugees, who wished their children to have usual early childhood education experiences, whilst being displaced from their homes. The following examples are those shared by teachers from Otago and Southland, in response to the families who arrived at their centres. How these centres, with the Ministry of Education, responded to this unusual experience provides not only examples of creativity, aid, and altruism, but demonstrated how historical, contemporary, and competitive divisions were swept aside as the more immediate need of supporting children and their whānau became the priority. (These stories have been lightly edited).

Otago Kindergarten Stories:

Story One: Dunedin Kindergarten Association (DKA):

We called an urgent meeting the week of the disaster with all our head teachers and discussed how we could support Christchurch. In negotiation with the Ministry of Education we increased all our licences to historic numbers, so that we could increase our roll numbers for children needing somewhere to go immediately. Our teams have been very responsive to this, and have displayed much empathy and a humanitarian perspective allowing numbers to increase. We peaked at approx 40 children. Most kindergartens gathered food and took it to the collection point (for distribution to families in Christchurch). At one kindergarten a family who ran a catering business produced boxes of yummy baking beautifully wrapped and labelled (e.g. gluten free) to go to Christchurch.

When one kindergarten had their black and red dress up day, the money donated was given directly to the kindergarten in Christchurch that the children were from, rather than just into the big pot of relief funding. Some kindergartens have had sausage sizzles, coin trails, dress-up day and donation, teddy bears picnic; it has been overwhelming. Every kindergarten has done something. There is much concern and care from the children, families and teachers of DKA.

Story Two: We had five children from Christchurch in all. One child didn't cope with the separation from the parent and therefore didn't continue to come. Another who had been extremely clingy at her kindergarten in Christchurch was amazingly relaxed and loved being part of our kindergarten from the minute she walked in the door. By the time she left she had so many new friends and was very involved in making group decisions. Her parents were so amazed at how happy and settled she was with us. We helped families

from Christchurch feel welcome and introduced them to others in similar position, as well as our families. One of our families lent toys to a little girl and sent home a note asking if there was anything they could do to help the family. We did learning stories that they could take back with them and farewelled them when they left. The families from Christchurch very much appreciated all we did for them and when leaving gave gifts (eg: books) to us as well as lovely cards. They embraced the kindergarten by helping with any activities, including parent help.

Story Three: There were six children: two of these were four years old, and four were three years old. They attended kindergarten for lengths of times ranging from two days to one month. The two girls and four boys arrived immediately following the February earthquake. Of the six families, five had at least one parent, and all came with their parents initially but the ones that stayed for longer periods stayed with their grandparents. They seemed settled, none anxious, and very comfortable to share their experiences. The parents were very appreciative of the support given.

Story Four: We had three children arrive at the beginning of March. They stayed until the schools opened in Christchurch. All were staying with family and settled well into the kindergarten. One parent from a professional background reported that her twins would throw the toys around their toy house, which concerned her to begin with but she realized later that it was important for them to act out the results of an earthquake.

Story Five: We had one child that came for a week to our kindergarten from Christchurch whose family was affected by the earthquake. He and his Mum arrived one day to ask about the possibilities of having some time to play at our kindergarten. This was no problem as we had some prior warning and knowledge that this could be the case and that the Ministry had increased our rolls to allow for extra children. The mother was just so thankful that we could accommodate her 3½ year old son as she was beside herself as to what to do with him, and he was missing his pre-school. Also when the earthquake struck they had left the next day to come south without Dad and were staying with relations nearby. He settled into our programme very quickly getting to know the teachers and children in the morning programme, happy to stay the second day without Mum and we offered resources for them to take to where they were staying as they came away with nothing and the relations did not have children so had nothing to offer in the way of toys. This is part of the thank you card from the family when they left: 'You have all been like a ray of sunshine during our stay in Dunedin, during our break from earthquake Christchurch. Thank you for your genuine care and support of [child's name]'.

Southland Kindergarten Stories:

Story One: We had one child come to us as a conditional enrolment. This child and her whānau had moved down to Southland for a ten-day break from their situation in

Christchurch. They were offered free accommodation from a family friend and jumped at this opportunity to have a break. The child's mother and grandmother approached us to see if we could help them by allowing their child to come to kindergarten. She had not attended kindergarten in Christchurch since the earthquake. Of course we said 'yes'. Our children welcomed her with open arms, as we had been talking about the earthquake and they understood what was happening in Christchurch. The child took a couple of days to become familiar with us and our centre, but once she did, she had lots of fun, moving freely around the kindergarten exploring our environment and trying out all sorts of activities. Grandma was our main contact during this time and she commented several times about how [child] was a much more settled girl, feeling much more relaxed and happy. It wasn't until we talked to Grandma that we realised the impact the earthquake was having on some children and their whānau. Grandma told us that the child had not been sleeping and that she missed the regular contact with her friends. We were very pleased that we could help this whānau while they were with us. Allowing the child to come to us for eight sessions enabled her to get a sense of routine and normality back into her life. Grandma was very appreciative of our help, which made us feel humbled.

Story Two: We have two children currently attending kindergarten as a result of the February quake, and another child waiting on a place early next term. All three families have indicated that their moves to here will be for the long term. It is quite hard dealing with the families as they are all homeless and traumatized; nothing much in the way of possessions. We have tried to be very accommodating and welcoming, supportive etc and introduced them to other agencies in the area as well as families. The Public Health Nurse has also given us some good handouts for them, such as dealing with the trauma and grief and other information sheets about local agencies etc. I think the kindergarten association has been very supportive of us and the earthquake children too. One family in particular are most appreciative of the kindergarten and all our support and friendship.

The Rattly Rock Band

7th – 11th March 2011

By Julia Sullivan

Over the week the children have been practicing a song they wrote about the big earthquake in Christchurch that devastated the region on the 22nd February 2011. They have spent the week using the ukuleles and other musical instruments as they formed their rock band.

On Friday the children who had been involved came together and performed in front of the rest of the children. The band consisted of a talented line up of male performers along with the one and only very talented female performer Miss Poppy.

This group took their roles very seriously and photos portray the contribution each member was making to the band as well as having a really enjoyable time. The song that was written on the Monday includes excerpts from the children. Before it was sung mention was made of the children who had contributed to its making.

This is the song written by the children at the Dunedin Hospital Early childhood Centre for the rattly rocks rock band to the tune of 'Cuddly Koalas.'

Stop the shake, Stop the shake
Its rattling us about, it's rattling us about.
Stopping the shake will make the people feel better, so stop
that shake, stop that shake. (*Grace*)

Put the people in a helicopter, (*Max*)
Put the people in a plane. (*Mya*)
To Dunedin, To Dunedin.
Quickly get them into a helicopter, so they can escape, they
can escape. (*Bella B*)

Children love having the opportunity to perform especially if they are able to play a musical instrument as well. The early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki empowers children to contribute to their own special strengths and interests as well as enabling them to develop an enhanced sense of self worth, confidence and enjoyment. Being immersed in musical activities is very enriching for children's development.

Tino Pai rawa tamariki.



Otago Education and Care Centre Stories

Story One: ‘Terry’, who visited us from Christchurch after the earthquake, is a 5 ½ year-old boy who had special needs. Although he had been attending school in Christchurch his Auntie, who was looking after him in Dunedin, choose to place him in our Preschool with his cousins. His family believed that the pedagogical environment of our early childhood centre, where he was alongside his cousins, would prove supportive of ‘Terry’ at this time. The Ministry of Education Dunedin office worked with Special Education Services to facilitate our accessing of ECE funding, even though ‘Terry’ was still enrolled at his Christchurch primary school. No extra support worker funding was required. The placement was successful for ‘Terry’ and our community as we worked alongside his family to return as much normality

to his life as possible. He has now returned to Christchurch.

Story Two: Three families from Christchurch rang looking for space in our early childhood service. They wanted their children to return to some normal daily experiences. One had a family connection to our centre and another had a family member receiving treatment at Dunedin hospital. The children attended during the two weeks from 28th February until 7th March when they returned home unsure of whether they would stay or return here. I looked on the Ministry of Education website each day for updates. We extended our ‘over 2’s’ licence temporarily to accommodate these families. We have sufficient staff to cover the ratio. We didn’t charge the families but claimed the government funding. Congratulations to the Ministry of Education for their swift action and clear information given regarding the change to the dual enrolment-funding rule.

Final Comment

Solnit (2009) concludes in her description of American disasters and the community responses they provoked: ‘Disaster sometimes knocks down institutions and structures and suspends private life, leaving a broader view of what lies beyond. The task before us is to recognize the possibilities visible through that gateway and endeavor to bring them into the realm of everyday’ (p. 313).

The examples described here, as responses by our New Zealand early childhood community, enact Te Whāriki in an authentic and meaningful way, providing us with examples of how and why individual early childhood services are the heart of our communities and why, nationally, early childhood education as a sector can stand united and strong for the well-being of our children and their whānau. They have presented us with new possibilities,

new ways of organising enrolments, programmes, patterns of attendances, places to play, and places to come together. Maybe, this ‘broader view of what lies beyond’ our everyday practices may be the beginning of a stronger, more creative, responsive approach to early childhood education in Aotearoa. May we not forget the lessons we’ve learned over this time.

On a personal note, the Canterbury authors of this article wish to thank each and every one of you who have touched our lives over these difficult months. Not only has the early childhood community been such a focal point for support for children and their whānau, but it has also been this for those of us who work in the sector in a range of roles. Your concern and care has helped us to keep the future of early childhood education in the forefront of our recovery in the rumbling, rolling world of Canterbury.

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Mindfulness in early childhood education

A position paper

Anna Whitehead

This position paper advocates for early childhood teachers and parents to regularly use of mindfulness practices themselves and with very young children. An understanding of 'mindfulness' is important because it can provide ways to support children during their sensitive years and sow seeds of kindness, tolerance and peace in our fast paced, competitive, consumerist culture. In addition, in times of trauma, mindfulness techniques offer teachers and parents ways to calm themselves and the children close to them. The value of using mindfulness techniques with children and for demonstrating mindfulness as adults is well supported by research (McCown, Reibel & Micozzi, 2010; Saltzman & Goldin, 2008).

What is mindfulness?

In the last decade there has been an explosion of research and interest in mindfulness-based interventions in many areas including health, education and psychology, and much research has gone into the role of mindfulness in the classroom (McCown, Reibel & Micozzi, 2010). Some of the most common practices of mindfulness involve focusing on one's breath and being aware of its movements. This is often used to physically relax the body which then also relaxes the mind.

Mindfulness is evident from early forms of Buddhist philosophy (and other Asian philosophical and religious thought). However, it is not a religion; neither is any religious belief necessary to its practice. Mindfulness has flourished in the West and has evolved and expanded into many traditions and methods of practice. Like Bone (2008), I have wrestled with the use of the 'S' word – spirituality – and found difficulty using this term. However 'mindfulness' with its inherent non-religious terminology and secular practices has given me new strength to promote contemplation and other spiritual practices.

Mindfulness can be described as the intentional and non-judgemental practice of staying in the moment, spending more time present to ourselves, and to our surroundings (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; McCown, Micozzi & Reibel, 2010).

Mindfulness focuses the mind's attention on something that is internally or externally specific; for example, our breath or our feelings. Hahn, (1975) describes mindfulness as 'the miracle by which we master and restore ourselves' (p. 21).

Although practicing mindfulness may result in a more relaxed physical and mental state, the goal is to be aware of and accepting of whatever state the body and mind are in. Mindfulness can be practiced through meditation, but unlike these other techniques, mindfulness can be practiced through mindful eating, mindful driving, mindful walking, or any experience in our lives (Dimidjian & Linehan, 2003).

How can mindfulness help teachers and young children?

Before offering mindfulness to our young children, we need to experience and develop our own personal practice and work on the transformation of their own being. We adults are often unaware of our bodies, distracted and habitually examining past events and anticipating future events. The teacher's 'presence' and awareness of their 'own' self is central to how the class learns. As Krause, Bochner, Duchesne, & McMaugh, (2010) state: 'We need to teach self-awareness, self-management and social awareness and responsible decision making for academic competence and improve the quality of life that adds to our humanity' (p. 242).

Using mindfulness in our daily life can help us to become more aware of our thoughts and feelings (before we shout at the boss/driver/child), and helps us to respond to trauma, conflict or irritations in a calmer manner and thus to improve the quality of our life. This also has a positive impact on those near us.

Having established and researched programs to support school-based mindfulness, Greenland (2010), maintains that such programs have the potential to make a large-scale positive impact on our society. They also help children develop life skills such as how to:

- Approach experience with curiosity and an open mind;

- Calm down when they're angry or upset;
- See what's happening in, to, and around them, other people, and the environment clearly and objectively;
- Develop compassion;
- Develop prosocial activities like patience, humility, happiness for the good fortune of others, generosity, diligence, and equanimity;
- Live gently and in balance with other people and their environment. (p. 9)

Practicing focused attention may also be a critical step to enable children (and adults) to improve their self-control. Becoming aware of one's emotions and actions, (for example, becoming aware that you get easily frustrated, having difficulty waiting for your turn, or lacking persistence) will often helps children (and adults!) to communicate effectively and appropriately (Singh, Wahler, Adkins & Myers, 2003; Treadway & Lazar, 2009). An eight-week mindfulness program for school age children established by Kabat-Zinn (1990) – 'Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction' (MBSR) – has provided much research data about the effects of mindfulness training. Saltzman and Goldin (2008) found

Simple mindfulness practices

When sharing mindfulness with children, it is important to use age-appropriate language, and remember that it is fun, engaging and supportive. It is also like learning a new sport or instrument; it requires ongoing practice.

A few mindful activities that teachers could start off with include:

Deep belly breathing – Sitting in a circle with a small group (say 3-10 children), get children to focus on the 'in' and 'out' breath. Put a soft toy on each child's tummy (lower end of stomach) and get them to feel the soft toy go up and down. Let them quieten down and see if they can hear their breath going in and out. You could say *'Let's close our eyes and take some slow deep breaths. See if you can find your still peaceful place. Can you feel a kind of warm, happy smile in your body? Do you feel it? Take some more deep breaths and really snuggle in to your peaceful place. Remember you can come here whenever you want, and stay as long as you like'*.

Do this a couple of times a day or when suitable for about 2-5 minutes (or a rule of thumb is one minute per their age in years).

Mindful thinking – After a belly breathing activity, you can get children to 'send a friendly wish' or kind thought to someone. They could send a kind thought to their parents, teacher or friend (or they could blow them a kiss). Then invite the children to really feel this loving moment to open their hearts. After a few practices you can develop this further – send a friendly wish to a sick person or relative or even someone they don't get on with. This is a simple way of developing children's compassion and caring nature.

Mindful seeing – Get children to mindfully observe some aspect of nature; for example, rain, a candle flame, clouds (lie on the ground looking up), or leaves (lie under a big tree). Let them drift off into a dreamy state. Again, only as long as the children feel comfortable (say 1-5 minutes).

Mindful listening – Get children to lie down in a suitable place without noisy distractions. A few examples could include reading the children an uplifting book, or playing some soothing music and let them be transported to a place where there are no worries only peace and tranquility. Another technique is to take them on a guided journey through a forest, beach walk, outer space or get them to think of their favourite place. You can make up these journeys, or use specific guided visualizations from books. If you want to remember your stories and use them again, write them on a piece of paper and laminate.

Mindful eating – At morning tea or lunch time, try to get them to spend a couple of minutes focusing on their food and how it tastes, rather than talking or listening to others. You could also provide pieces of apple, orange or other fruit. In the beginning get children to look at the food and simply describe what they see: colour, texture – what they smell and what is happening in their mouth as they look and smell. Then in guided silence with their eyes closed, instruct the children to take one bite. You could say *'Take one bite, paying attention to what is happening in your mouth, noticing the taste. Don't rush; take one bite at a time, noting how the taste changes, how your teeth and tongue work... See if you can notice the urge to swallow as the food moves down your throat... After you have swallowed, when you are ready, take another bite. Take your time. Be curious about your food. Before you open your eyes, notice how your body and your mind feels, now, in this moment'*. (Adapted from Saltzman & Goldin, 2008, p. 147).

Try to model the activity you are doing, and remember that the centre mood or energy will not change to instant harmony. Remember to keep practicing over the weeks and allow the children time to get used to the practices. Children may also need to fidget or move their bodies when doing the activities, but try to keep them focused on the activity. They are likely to be getting a lot out of the activity even if it appears that they are not. The fact that you are taking time to do these activities with the child shows them that you value them.

that MBSR helped young children to discover their still quiet place that made them feel calm, relaxed and happy. It also taught children to be mindful of their feelings by finding, naming, describing them and figuring out what those feelings 'wanted'. This helped the children to come in touch with their feelings, improved their development of emotional intelligence, self control and social relations.

Similarly, the initial findings from the major longitudinal Dunedin Multidisciplinary Study (Moffitt et al., 2011) show that very young children who show they have self control are likely to grow healthy adults. This reinforces the importance of early experiences that teach children to self-regulate. With this in mind, mindfulness can be seen as a particularly useful way for children to develop self-awareness and self-control.

Practicing mindfulness also gives children a chance to feel less pressure, and by not being distracted and just experiencing quietness, children are often able to slip into the deeper, more relaxed states of consciousness.

So I encourage early childhood teachers and the parents of young children to explore the ideas and practices of mindfulness, and to remember that mindfulness is a capability that builds with practice. Your own experiences will illustrate their value.

Daily life is stressful for many of us, and those of us who are holding traumatic experiences in our bodies are under even more stress. As Langer states 'the more mindful we are, the more choices we have and the less reactive we become' (p. 19). Mindfulness practices are simple and encourage us to be more aware of ourselves in a place, and to build our sense of wellbeing.

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For more information:

There are many texts and websites available to teachers. Some useful ones include:

Websites

- www.compassionatemind.co.uk

Set up in 2006 the Foundation aims to promote wellbeing through the scientific understanding and application of compassion.

- www.susankaisergreenland.com/

This website provides access to resources on mindfulness. It includes articles and chapters, video clips and podcasts. It includes the innerkids.org clips which show young children doing mindful activities in the classroom.

- www.thehawnfoundation.org

The Hawn Foundation has developed programmes for children of different ages to find happiness and success in school and life. It includes the 'Mind Up' curriculum.

- www.soundstrue.com.

This website offers a wide range of resources including mindfulness practices that you can try out online.

Texts

- Greenland, S.K. (2010). *The mindful child: How to help your kid manage stress and become happier*. New York: Free Press.

This text provides inspirational real-life experiences and examples. Greenland provides practical activities to use with young children. Parents and teachers will find this text useful and informative.

- Gunaratana, B.H. (2002). *Mindfulness in plain English*. Boston, MA: Wisdom Books.

This is a helpful introduction to the origins and nature of mindfulness.

- Hahn, N. T. (1991). *The miracle of mindfulness*. London: Rider.

This is regarded as a classic. A good introduction to mindfulness, it provides insights and exercises that we can use in everyday life.

- Hahn, N, T. (2010). *A pebble for your pocket. Mindful stories for children and grownups*, (revised ed.). Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.

Great 'read to' book for children at bedtime. Would suit 5-15 year olds.

- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005). *Coming to our senses: Healing ourselves and the world through mindfulness*. London: Piatkus.

Easy to read, introductory book on mindfulness. Suitable for parents, teachers and other adults wanting to get started.

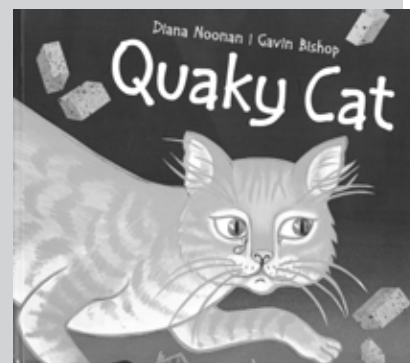
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This is an academic text, useful for teachers. It includes the template and contents of Jon Kabat-Zinn's program, 'Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction' (MBSR).

'Around him, the city was rolling and quaking'

A review of 'Quaky cat' by Diana Noonan and Gavin Bishop

Publisher: Scholastic | Cost: \$19.50 | Reviewed by Julie Plows



Written following the first major Canterbury earthquake of September 2010, this children's picture book is about a cat 'Tiger' that wakes with a 'feeling of dread' on the morning of the earthquake. He then runs through the city of Christchurch, experiencing buildings crumbling. He climbs up a tree until the evening, when he then makes the journey back to his home, hoping to find his friend Emma.

Diana Noonan uses lively poetry to tell the story. One poignant page describes how Tiger sees a tree in the Cathedral Square which 'quivers' which is a reflection perhaps, of how the main character is feeling, but also inadvertently foreshadows what was to happen when the cathedral collapsed in the more disastrous earthquake in February. Gavin Bishop's colourful illustrations vividly bring the story to life.

I believe it is important to discuss feelings and emotions with children. I believe children will identify with both the feelings of distress and of love that are portrayed within the story. Children are sure to enjoy the ending wherein the reader is comforted by the sense of home as an emotional

connection. There is a sense of closure in the story where "home is a hug" and "home is where love keeps you safe".

It is great that this story is set in a New Zealand context. Many children are aware of the Christchurch earthquakes via extended family and friends who live in Canterbury. I have noticed in 2011 that natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis and more recently tornadoes, are frequently mentioned by children and adults. The theme of the story could be used to assist with the education of other children in New Zealand who have never experienced an earthquake.

I believe that this picture book of 22 pages in length would be appropriate for young children of approximately four years of age in early childhood education settings.

I am impressed by the sentiment and intentions of the writer, illustrator and publisher of this book. There is a note in the book that proceeds and royalties from the book are going to Christchurch charities; a visit to the book's website indicates that over \$100,000 has been raised so far.

Pondering the 'tiger mother'

Parenting in changing cultural contexts

Karen Guo

The focus of this paper is on Chinese immigrant parenting. By drawing on the discourses of Chinese immigrant parenting beliefs and practices, it provides an analysis of the childrearing stories told by Amy Chua (2011), an American Chinese mother. Chua shared in her book *'Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother'* how she created excellence for her daughters through the use of Chinese parenting approaches. Chua's 'tiger mother' practice, with its emphasis on parenting control, unyielding imposition of parenting rules, and strong focus on children's success, captured my interest. In the context of her immigrant background and Chinese ethnicity, one would suppose that the 'tiger mother' book presented a standard account of Chinese immigrant parenting. Through reviewing relevant literature, and portraying an example of New Zealand Chinese immigrant parents' beliefs and practices, this paper sketches some general patterns of Chinese immigrant parenting. I argue that Chua's approach embodies traditions and ideologies of Chinese culture, but is not a typical example.

The paper will have four main sections. In the first section, I describe the 'tiger mother' practice. The second section of the paper provides evidence from previous studies on Chinese immigrant parenting. The third section refers to a recent study that explored perceptions and practices of Chinese immigrant parents who had children attending early childhood centres in New Zealand. The final section of the paper positions the 'tiger mother' approach within some general patterns of Chinese immigrant parenting, calling into question issues related to Chua's narrow perspective.

'Tiger mother' practice

The rhetoric of *The battle hymn of the tiger mother* (Chua, 2011) focuses on Chua's harsh, extreme and inflexible parenting as having its basis in Chinese culture. Chua was raised in a Chinese American family. She and her sisters "drilled math and piano every afternoon and were never allowed to sleep over at our friends houses. Our report cards had to be perfect; while our friends were rewarded for Bs, for us getting an A-minus was unthinkable" (2011, p.16).

Now a law professor at Yale University, Chua graduated from Harvard Law with top marks. Chua confesses that although she was not naturally curious like her American classmates,

she outperformed them because she worked hard. Chua believes that the tough Chinese parenting that her parents used with her worked well so that she was determined to raise her daughters in that way. Chua writes: 'I was the one that in a very overconfident immigrant way thought I knew exactly how to raise my kids'. Chua claims that this is the essence of tough Chinese parenting, as opposed to the lax Western kind. In her book, Chua states: "a lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically successful kids. They wonder how Chinese parents produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it's like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I've done it" (2011, p.1).

One feature of Chua's parenting practices is the series of rules that she consistently imposed on her daughters. Chua's daughters were never allowed to attend a sleepover, have a playdate, be in school play, complain about not being in a school play, watch TV or play computer games, choose their own extracurricular activities, get any grade less than A, not be the first student in every subject except gym and drama, not play any instrument other than the piano or violin.

As a mother, Amy Chua made a remarkable commitment, to, for example, attend all her daughter's musical lessons and supervise their practice at home day after day. In return, Chua commanded her daughters to try their very best. There was no excuse for her daughters to not work hard. Chua wrote how she forced a daughter to practise a difficult piece on piano for six hours without food, water or using the bathroom. Chua once shut her daughters outside in the winter without their coats when they failed to follow set schedules.

Chua admits that it was precisely because of her urge to produce academic success and exceptional musical talents, she chose to use the Chinese parenting model to battle against the Western styles that had dominated her daughters' lives. For Chua, Chinese parenting is more effective than the Western one because it "prepares children for the future, lets them see what they are capable of, and arms them with skills, work habits, and inner confidence that no one can ever take away" (Chua, 2011, p.73).

Chua's approach calls attention to Chinese immigrant parents. Her parenting is limited to 'one' type that (1) draws a

line between Chinese and Western cultures, and (2) starts from assumptions broadly compatible with the very early traditions of Chinese parenting. If we take her story seriously, we fail to consider people as living in sociocultural contexts that are dynamic, transferable and evolving. I take the view that life experience is contextually bound in time and space.

My argument in this paper presents Chinese immigrant parenting as a process of exploration for effective strategies in response to social, cultural and contextual influences. It is by no means a simple reproduction of traditions. The special circumstances of immigration are in the centre of my conceptualization. In the following section, I review literature in order to draw out a general description of Chinese immigrant parenting.

Immigrant parenting as a response to the changing cultural contexts

Creating a better life is the major objective of immigration. For almost all Chinese immigrants, leaving home for another country is driven by a dream of an improved existence. Parents especially hold the expectation of a better education and better future for their children.

However, immigration is an experience of struggle, stress, and uncertainty (Alfred, 2010; Sharlin & Moin, 2001; Souto-Manning, 2007). It is characterized by “determination and hesitation, expectations and apprehensions, and dreams and worries” (Li, 2001, p.489). The role of parents becomes hard to play too. Schniter (2002) concluded in his study that immigrants needed to respond to the mismatch between their own practices and those of others in the host country. In an earlier study Florsheim (1997) found that immigration brings parents into the perplexing position of not knowing how to apply parenting skills acquired in one context to facilitate children’s development in a different one.

Despite the perplexity, struggles and worries, most Chinese immigrants positively respond to these experiences and find ways to fulfill their dreams. It should be pointed out here that the choice of immigration for most Chinese immigrants is based on an understanding that living in another country is difficult. Thus responding to their new life challenges on the part of these people can be considered as a motivated and prepared one.

It is the tradition of Chinese culture that parents take responsibility for children’s upbringing (Chao, 1994). The effect of this tradition on Chinese immigrant parents is that they maintain parental efficacy, regardless of where they live (Souto-Manning, 2007). This tradition, when coupled with their aspiration for a better life, sets Chinese immigrant parents in motion to explore, identify and try out useful means that help them and their children settle in their chosen country.

Literature analysis of Chinese immigrant parents demonstrates that their parenting practices are characterized by a combination of Chinese traditions and cultural practices of the immigration countries. Chinese immigrant parents expect this combination to have two benefits: first, it would retain their roots and the advantageous features of their culture; second, it

would speed up their integration into the other countries.

Li (2001) reported on Chinese Canadian parents’ beliefs in the effectiveness of Chinese traditions as a guide to development. These parents claimed, “Children who grow up in Chinese culture are generally motivated to pursue excellence” (p.482), and “the demanding nature of Chinese parenting could ultimately produce positive outcomes” (p.484). In their study of the values and practices of first-generation Chinese in the United States, Jose, Huntsinger and Liaw (2000) noted the endorsement of traditional Chinese values of those people, including particularly persistence, hard work, and direct teaching.

It is important to add that the difficulties of establishing a sense of belonging in their host country could also give rise to Chinese immigrants upholding their home culture. Chan’s (2004) research on recent Chinese immigrants in Australia discovered that out of a sense of security, Chinese immigrants can be more Chinese than the Chinese in China.

In times and places of exposure to new cultural experiences, Chinese immigrant parents also adapt their parental styles to the needs of the new society. A change in traditional Chinese cultural beliefs among Chinese immigrant families is reported in the literature (Parette, Chuang & Huer, 2004). An example is Lin and Fu’s study (1990) in which they observed the adaptability of the Chinese immigrants to the lifestyle and social structures of the United States. Similarly, Li’s (2001) study of Canadian Chinese immigrants revealed that they were motivated to conform to the Canadian sociocultural context, and to develop community membership in the new society. After studying Asian American children, Adler (2001) concluded that Asian American parents were willing to have children acquire American culture.

The most obvious explanation for Chinese immigrant parents’ positive attitudes towards the host cultures relates to the importance of the host culture for their children’s development. Given their aspiration for a better future for their children, Chinese immigrant parents undoubtedly work towards making their children successful members in the chosen country.

Chinese plus Kiwi cultures: A New Zealand study

In research conducted with a group of Chinese immigrant children in New Zealand their early childhood teachers and parents (Guo, 2010), one question related to the children’s home experiences was “What are Chinese immigrant parents beliefs and practices about childrearing and early education?”. A significant statement by all the Chinese parents was that the children needed to learn serious things, such as words, numbers, drawing, or piano. The following are some examples of the parents’ reply to ‘What do you regularly do with your child at home?’

Anne’s mother: I teach Anne words and numbers.

Eden’s mother: Children must be taught. I give Eden tasks everyday, colouring pictures, writing English alphabets, Chinese words or numbers.

Luke’s father: Luke has a forty minute piano session each

day. He has to sit there all the time because piano is a formal lesson. Although he could not in the beginning back to two months ago, he can do it now. Except for piano, Luke's mother teaches him drawing.

Xiaohan's mother: I teach Xiaohan some English words and she is learning chess.

The word *teach* was used in all the parents' statements. This indicates that the children experienced being *taught* in their homes. If Chinese culture has a strong learning-teaching tradition, it appears that the parents in this study upheld that tradition by actively involving themselves in their child's learning and undertaking the role of supervision and teaching (Chao, 1994; Gorman, 1998; Johnston & Wong, 2002).

Two reasons may explain the parents' attempts to introduce their children to serious learning.

Firstly, academic skills were seen as crucial for children's development. All the parents agreed that their children should develop these skills. Luke's father said that learning must take place now otherwise it would be too late: "You know the Chinese saying that beginning decides the end. It is important that a young child takes life seriously or it will be too late".

Secondly, the parents believed that there were lots of valuable things in Chinese culture which their children with Chinese descent must retain:

Eden's mother: There are lots of good things in Chinese culture we must let our children know, such as the value of working hard, self discipline.

Leah's mother: The fundamental education is solid in China and it is good that children have a good start so that they can be more competitive.

Sarah's mother: I like the hard working attitude in Chinese culture and I want Sarah and her sister to have that.

Xiaohan's mother: The academic emphasis in Chinese culture benefits children.

It seems that the parents upheld the Chinese cultural emphasis on academic pursuit, cultivation of proper characters (Huntsinger, Huntsinger, Ching & Lee, 2000), the use of the Chinese language, and the importance of parents' role in teaching children (Chao, 1994). Central to the parents' opinions was their recognition of the values of the original culture (Adler, 2001; Li, 2001).

All the parents stated that the key purpose of sending their children to early childhood centres was for the children to learn to function in the New Zealand society. Many of them, therefore, intended to embrace their children's centre programmes.

Jim's mother: Jim cannot learn 'Kiwi' things from me. It is important that he learns that in the centre.

Rick's mother: The centre gives some important things that he cannot get from home so it is good that Rick fits in.

Sarah's mother: Sarah should learn New Zealand lives

because she will grow in this country. Her centre can give her that.

Anne's father: It is important that Anne gets to know how to function in a 'Kiwi' environment.

Awareness of the need to prepare the children for a happy life style was also apparent in the parents' perceptions and practices. The parents commented on the good aspect of a less pressured life and the importance of helping children make choices and enjoy life.

Jim's mother: I want Jim to be happy and enjoy life too.

Leah's mother: It is equally important that Leah has a balanced way of living.

Rick's mother: Kiwi's life style has lots of good things. Rick should pick it up by learning to relax and to be hands on, but not to only do academic things.

Luke's mother: I have gone through the cruel systems of Chinese education so do not want Luke to experience all that anymore. Taking the easy-to-go life style is not really a bad thing. My husband and I are learning to expose him and his sister to those life experiences too.

It is likely that the parents expected their children to be experiencing the mainstream way of living. Immigrant parents' embracing of the mainstream culture was similarly reported by Ulich and Oberhuemer (1997) in their study of Turkish children's experiences in German kindergartens, where those parents treated the kindergartens as "a ticket that is being bought in advance to give the child a chance in mainstream German education" (p.68). What is particularly noticeable about the Chinese parents in this study is that they intended to adopt the mainstream culture, and to have a new life for and with their children.

Chinese immigrant parents versus 'The tiger mother'

Within the studies discussed about Chinese immigrant parenting, child rearing is a practice that combines the Chinese and Western approaches. Chinese immigrant parenting is intertwined with life contexts. It is against the Chinese traditions and immigration backdrops that one can appropriately understand it. In their changing situations, one of the main tasks that Chinese immigrant parents undertake has been to make adjustments. The central function of their parenting is to explore how some Chinese traditions can exist in the presence of Western practices.

The parenting approach exemplified in Chua's stories, however, is based on the notions that: 1) Chinese immigrant parenting is characterized by a harsh style and it is more effective than a lenient approach; 2) Chinese parenting is different from Western parenting; and 3) Chinese people maintain the traditional style unconditionally. These notions also assume that Chinese immigrant parents have objections to non-Chinese parenting.

The most significant effect of Chua's story is that it

foregrounds the idea that the Chinese tradition influences the practices of Chinese immigrant parents. This is consistent with all the other studies on this topic. The key limitation of Chua's parenting, however, is that, by attempting to strongly emphasize the Chinese culture, it ignores the Western influences inherent within her life. I find the loss of the Western role in Chua's parenting and the dichotomy between Chinese and Western cultures to be inappropriate.

There are reasons that Chua's parenting approach is different from those of other Chinese immigrant parents. Firstly, Chua is a second generation of Chinese immigrant. She did not live in China as other parents did. Without seeing the changes in her home country, Chua's image of Chinese culture can be a very old one. Secondly, Chua's husband is American Jewish. Their daughters, therefore, were naturally exposed to much American culture at home and in society. Their experience with Chinese culture could be very limited so that Chua tried extremely hard to help them with that. Thirdly, Chua's parents applied the Chinese style with her and it was effective. As a consequence, Chua used it with her own daughters.

Given her circumstances that are different from many other Chinese immigrants, Chua's accounts, therefore, do not portray a typical picture about Chinese immigrant parenting. The heart of Chua's experience revolves around a desperate endeavour to remedy what she sensed to have lost in her daughters' lives. It is a tale of Chua's struggles to defend personal beliefs in response to her specific contexts. I argue that immigrant parenting analyses should not be limited to the study of one account in a way that makes the many other accounts invisible and beyond study. If we focus too exclusively on Chua's stories, and on her extreme battles between Chinese and Western approaches, we run the risk of underestimating life as a dynamic and evolving system.

Conclusion

This article has presented a critical perspective to the study of Chinese immigrant parents from the stories told by an American Chinese, Amy Chua that documented her harsh approach to Chinese parenting. In writing this article I aimed to conceptualize Chinese immigrant parenting more openly.

The article indicated that Chinese immigrant parenting was characterized by a combination of the Chinese traditions and the influence of the immigration cultures. Chinese immigrant experiences include their struggles, responses, strategies, and images of the past and present lives. Chinese immigrants' aspiration for a better life appears crucial in their parenting values and practices.

Rethinking Chinese immigrant parenting within the postmodern paradigm requires new conceptions not of people as particular cultural beings, but of their beliefs and practices as contextually constructed. Such rethinking would provide a foundation for a new model of education suited to our global era.

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Whose culture has capital?

Class, culture, migration and mothering by Bin Wu

Publisher: Peter Lang;

Cost \$US 57.95

Reviewed by Anne Grey and April Choi

From Anne Grey:

Bin Wu's book is about the experiences of skilled Chinese mothers' raising their children in New Zealand. She uses Bourdieu's theory of capital (1986) to form a conceptual framework of migration in which capital is understood to be more than evidence of money (economic capital) but also having cultural and social value. Cultural capital is defined as the cultural values, attitudes and dispositions of a cultural group, and social capital is the resources that are available to each person to enable them to take advantage of social situations. Bourdieu states that each person operates in a field or a social network by utilizing *habitus*, or the longstanding dispositions that are formed that enable individuals to cope with experience. In this book, the author demonstrates that because new immigrants to a country have changed their field, the *habitus* that they usually draw on also changes. For this reason, their economic, cultural and social capital is reduced.

For me, this book provides valuable perceptions of the lives of the Chinese mothers interviewed in this book and the aspirations and challenges faced by new immigrant families. I was fascinated to read their views on what quality early childhood education should involve. I also found the section on the language development of these bilingual children extremely insightful. When I shared the book with other mothers who had experienced the challenges of immigration, one, April Choi, was provoked to write this reflection.

From April Choi:

This book by Bin Wu demonstrates the dilemmas that arise for Chinese mothers who as immigrants face many difficulties in New Zealand, including housing problems and financial insecurity, made more stressful by social isolation. Early childhood education (e.c.e.) reflects the dominant culture and this can be problematic for immigrant mothers, who often lack the personal confidence and support to maintain their own culture in their new settings (Wu, 2009).

To foster learning and development, e.c.e. teachers must understand children's different cultural and social environments; a deep understanding of *Te whariki* reveals an inclusive

education curriculum and respecting diversities as one of the teaching tools that fosters children's interests (Ministry of Education 1996). According to Wu, appropriate use of language and encouraging play-based cooperative activities can help children to develop connective links between their home and educational settings (Ministry of Education, 1998). However, Wu identifies immigrant mothers as marginalized and inadequately represented in the existing globalised education system.

As an Asian immigrant mother, I have had similar settling difficulties. Almost 15 years ago my husband and I came here with our two little boys, aged four and two. In the first couple of years in New Zealand, I was struggling to settle in the new society myself which was affected by the difficulty my husband had in finding a job. He was a computer engineer and ran his own business in Korea, so after a few disappointing job interviews he decided start his own business in New Zealand. When he started this business, we had a new baby girl and I was caring for my sister's son as he was staying with our family to study. My husband had his business at home fixing broken and assembling new computers. Meanwhile, I helped with his business and took care of all the children and the housework, sometimes I even looked after my neighbor's children. During this busy time, I had no time for think about rest or visiting my family and friends in Korea at all. Life was busy and demanding everyday and socializing was a luxury. Furthermore the notion of traditional Confucian descriptions of a woman/mother's job was to see the home and the load of housework as portraying loyalty, diligence and obedience (Lee, 2005).

I took my children to the local Playcentre as it was affordable and convenient. I pushed the pram and my oldest son walked along to the Playcentre. This way, I could look after my children and meet local people and friends at the same time. During my eight years at the Playcentre, the place provided opportunity to learn real English language, culture, and social opportunity.



It also offered support as I could learn and grow with my children. When I came to New Zealand, I hardly spoke any English words. Despite this I made many kiwi friends and Asian friends; we support each other. I actively participated in all of the Playcentre parents' courses, meetings and weekend activity workshops. I usually took my children with me because I had no place that could look after them. These involvements and experiences gave me an opportunity to build confidence in supporting my children's schooling and social cultural extension.

At the beginning of my time at the Playcentre I used to sit with my children, or clean toys and paint containers, because I didn't know what else to do. My children and I were shy; I had learnt from my parents that asking for assistance interrupts other people's time. My children and I were silent learners and we observed all the different cultural and social norms (Igoa, 1995). One day I noticed Kiwi children who have active mothers were also very active and loud, but a passive mother's children were also quiet. I don't think language problems were the only factor that made children passive and sit in the corner by him/herself; it was more the parents' attitude towards contributing to daily programs. I was willing to learn and contribute to the daily program, which included organizing and participating in children's activities so my children and I could slowly extend our boundaries.

While my husband and I were willing to learn and adapt to the new culture, society and language we also wanted to keep our Korean roots. We went to the Korean Buddhist temple to meet Korean people. At home we only allowed Korean to be spoken, just like most Asian parents, but we found the children kept quiet and didn't speak much Korean at home. We had to negotiate somewhere where our children could learn the new language, culture and social norms as well as maintain their Korean roots. It is never a win-win situation. Although having financial difficulties and being immigrant parents means not only having language difficulties in the new society, there was more than that. While we were willing to contribute, in trying to belong to New Zealand society we faced limitations and difficulties.

However we put our priorities on the children's learning and giving them a quality upbringing. Money was only spent on housing, food and children's education. We were, however, willing to provide music, sports, art and social opportunities, as we were sure it would contribute to building their confidence and learning in a new society. Visiting local art exhibitions, music theatres, libraries and Boy Scout camps were replacing our family weekends. Although Saturday Korean school provided our children a chance to listen and play with their Korean friends, we gave it up in order to enroll in music and sports activities on Saturday morning.

My eldest son has slight memory of his grandparents and his youth in his hometown but my other son hasn't any. My daughter, who was born here, has no memories or connection with her extended family members, apart from through the phone, but she always has difficulties making connections with them. My daughter one day said she is the only kiwi in our family because she was born at North Shore hospital. My youngest son (who came here when he was two years old) said to her "But you have Korean blood and mom and dad are all Korean, you like eating hot chili meat and kimchi. You are Korean". But she said

"No, I am not". I think my responsibility as an immigrant mother is to create a safe home-base, let them know I am here for them so they can connect to their original roots of culture and beliefs within their new hometown in NZ.

In this book, Bin Wu interviewed Chinese immigrant mothers who faced cultural and social change, as skilled immigrants' categories; most of the women interviewed had higher social and cultural possessions in their birth place, but now needed to start again as newcomers without family support. I think settling and integrating into a new society is quite challenging to most immigrant families. However, respecting Asian immigrants is essential as we are in a diverse society, we need to extend our understanding to all immigrated mothers who are struggling to adapt to the new way of life, while maintaining their personal roots at the same time.

I think most immigrant mothers, regardless of their socio-economic status and ethnicities are attempting to become affiliated with New Zealand education system in order to provide the best for their children. Parents have already made personal sacrifices to better their children's future.

Now, as immigrant parents, mothers work hard support their children, and their growing psychological needs. New immigrants are willing to contribute to making NZ society a better living place, but the host communities need to make an effort and use a 'working together' approach to widen the eyes of the community to help understand and respect immigrant families. This helps immigrant families and children so they can settle and overcome general disadvantages in new environment more easily, which is vital for helping children cope with a new environment and it will bring out positive outcomes in their participation of the new nation.

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Moving beyond beginnings: Music and sand

Making music together: Providing music experiences in early childhood settings by Maureen Woodhams

The world in your sandpit: Understanding sand play in early childhood by Bernard Woodhams

Both \$21.50 available from Playcentre Publications

Reviewed by Sue Stover

For the past decade, Playcentre Publications has been producing shiny booklets on the 'areas of play'. Arguably the most difficult area for many centres was the focus of the first booklet: carpentry. *Woodworking wizardry* was published in 2002, and interestingly, its author Nic Van Onselen, was prompted by years as 'Mr Nic' who helped maintain and extend young children's interests in woodworking at his wife's early childhood centre in Kawerau. Since then booklets have appeared on 'the why, what, who and how to' of clay (2003), collage (2003), cooking with children (2006), and blocks (2008). The latest revision of the 1990s classic of children and art, *Magic places*, appeared in a similar format in 2007.

Most recently are two delightful booklets by the Woodhams: *Making music together* by Maureen Woodhams (2009), and *The world in your sandpit* by her husband, Bernard Woodhams (2011). While the format remains the same, the booklets themselves have become increasingly attractive with colour photography and the quality of the images is such that I can almost feel the smooth ivory of a piano keyboard, or grit between my toes.

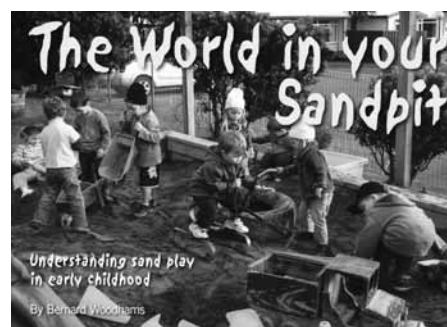
Making music together is almost too bulky for the (stapled) booklet format with eight detailed chapters which move easily between the basics of playing ukulele (or guitar), the music curriculum, integrating a 'feature' instrument, displaying and making instruments (including poi, clay koauau, and flax shakers), basic notation and composing, and the science of sound. The sociocultural aspects of music are foregrounded, initially through illustrations: the first picture in the book shows a roaring fire inside a centre's sandpit, with children and adults grouped around, ready to sing. Later Rogoff's 'planes of analysis' are used to theorise how children experience and learn music as members of groups. What struck me as particularly salient was the large message to adults: 'Make a pact to support each other'.

Sandplay is also grounded in social and cultural context with the montage of photos in the opening chapter shifting the readers' focus from the centre's sandpit to the beach; sometimes a child focused on the sand; sometimes a focus on what is

possible with adults who also enjoy the creative possibilities of sand. There's even the ubiquitous 'sand around the mouth' photo of the toddler who has to know what sand tastes like. The possibilities and practicalities of centre-based provision of sandplay are a feature, alongside the learning that can be evident. Schemas are emphasised, for example, especially in children's interests primarily in moving sand; while 'construction' is considered from multiple perspectives, including how the presence of a more skilled sandplayer can 'scaffold' more complexity and challenge. There is a page of Te Reo relevant to sandplay.

These booklets are very useful for those adults (whether e.c. teachers, student teachers, or parents) who are ready to get more than superficially involved in the 'areas of play'. They capture and expand on what can be described as knowledge about the free play environments that still characterise e.c. services in this country; they offer directions beyond 'following the child's interest' so that the adult can (for a while at least) become 'the more expert other' alongside the child. There is so much more to sandplay than digging, making sand castles and volcanoes. There is so much more to music than 'Twinkle twinkle' and pushing 'play' on the CD machine! The booklets also capture aspects of 'kiwi culture' that might have, in a previous generation, been taken for granted.

Kia kaha, Playcentre Publications, for keeping warm the fires of the wondrous fun and learning for children and adults alike in these areas of play.



Contributors

Sara Bole is the Head Teacher at Arrowtown Pre-School and has taught here for over six years now, Sara also studied at Otago University and is from a very small town called Five Forks, near Oamaru.

Annie Cafe: I was brought up in the Queenstown/Arrowtown community. I am now a qualified Early Childhood teacher, having studied at Otago University and graduating in 2009 with a BEd. Since then I have been teaching at Arrowtown Pre-School with children aged 3-5. We have a fantastic teaching team here at Pre-School, and an inspiring setting surrounding us. Arrowtown is a pretty small town and we have strong connections with our wider community. We are very interested in the Reggio Emilia approach, and we are always finding new and different ways to inspire to our own practice and programme with this.

April Choi: I was born in Korea and moved to NZ 15 years ago with my family. I was at a Playcentre for a long time with my three children. After my youngest daughter started primary school I wanted to learn more about children and their development and learning. I am currently studying early childhood education at AUT and work at a local centre as a reliever. I believe teaching is another way of learning and growing my personality as I grow with children.

Jan Dobson is currently the Centre Manager at New Beginnings Preschool, Linwood Christchurch. She has over twenty years experience within early education and care, with twelve years experience managing centres. Jan believes in promoting and nurturing communities of wellbeing, with the heart of wellbeing centred within the core teaching team.

Judith Duncan is currently Associate Professor in Education at the University of Canterbury. Her research and writing interests focus around early childhood policy impact on children and whānau, and children's rights.

Dunedin Hospital Early Childhood Centre's 'Over 2' teaching team consists of eight qualified teachers: Sue Johnson, Leonie Brewer, Julia Sullivan, Toni Seiuli, Julz O'Neil, Lynn Mukumbo, Nichola Brewer, Shirley McQueen and Bridget McDonald. The teachers all shared in creating the stories and supporting our visiting children from Christchurch. Both the teachers and centre also had their own personal links to the tragic events happening at the time.

Lyn Foote is currently Co-ordinator of Early Childhood programmes at the University of Otago, College of Education. Her research interests focus on early childhood curriculum and children's learning.

Alex Gunn works at the University of Canterbury in the School of Educational Studies and Human Development. She was a steward for the 10th early childhood convention and chaired the academic planning committee for that event. Formerly a teacher in childcare, Alex now researches, writes, and teaches into

various aspects of early childhood education and care.

Anne Grey is Programme Leader of the Early Years Programmes at AUT University. She is also Licensee of the AUT University early childhood education centre. Anne's main area of research is teaching practice in early childhood education and leadership in early childhood education. Before teaching at tertiary level, Anne taught in early childhood centres and in primary school. She has also helped to set up community early childhood centres in the area near to where she lives.

Karen Guo lectures in the Department of Education at the Unitec Institute of Technology. She immigrated to New Zealand from China. Karen has two children, a teenage girl and young school boy. Her parenting experience leads to research in Chinese immigrant children, Chinese immigrant parenting and cultural diversity in early childhood education.

Hunter family: Mark, Georgie, Alice 5 (new entrant at Redcliffs school), James 2 (attended preschool). *Lived:* Mt Pleasant, Christchurch. Our house has been deemed unsafe to live in but should be fixable. *Now live:* In Arrowtown. We have relocated here and intend to stay until we have further information about when our house is likely to be fixed. Rentals are expensive and hard to find in Christchurch in the area where we lived, so we have decided we are best here for now until we know more about building timeframes.

Julie Plows (BFA, DipTchECE, PGradDipEd.) has experience as a registered teacher in the e.c.e. sector and as a lecturer in the tertiary sector. Julie has published an article on infants and music in *The First Years: Ngā Tau Tuatahi, New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education*. She has presented workshops upon visual arts in e.c.e. at three national conferences in the past two years.

Ali Wenger's professional background includes being a bilingual early childhood and primary school teacher and teacher education lecturer. In her current role as manager of kindergarten operations, she heads an education services team in regards to pedagogical leadership in the association, striving to provide quality learning environments for Kidsfirst tamariki, and planning professional development for teaching staff.

Anna Whitehead is a senior lecturer in the AUT School of Education teaching in early childhood. She has research and teaching interests that focus on teaching and learning and include spirituality and mindfulness in early childhood education. Anna is currently involved in collaborative research on the use of mindfulness as part of building resiliency in children's lives. She can be contacted at Anna.Whitehead@aut.ac.nz.

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