NZ Early Childhood Research Conference
Thursday 26th – Saturday 28th January 2012
St Andrews on the Terrace, 30 The Terrace, Wellington

PROGRAMME
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Venue

The conference is being held at St Andrews on the Terrace, 30 The Terrace, central Wellington city. Thursday’s programme will be conducted in the church. On Friday the church and conference rooms behind the church will be utilised. On Saturday we will have access to the conference rooms only.

Tea/coffee and snacks will be available in the downstairs kitchen during morning and afternoon-tea breaks. And tea/coffee only at lunch-times. Bathrooms are located upstairs and downstairs.

There is no parking at the venue. There are a number of car-park buildings near the venue. The train station is a 10 minute walk away. If catching a shuttle or taxi from the airport, tell the driver that St Andrews on the Terrace is at the Thorndon end of The Terrace (not far from the Beehive and Parliament Buildings).

Registration Information

Registration information is available on the childforum website. Go to www.childforum.com and click on the EVENTS page. Registration is open to members and non-members. A discounted rate is available to ChildForum members. A one-day option for Friday-only registration is available. If you are unable to attend on the day you are welcome to send someone in your place but please tell us who is replacing you before the conference starts (fees are non-refundable).

Registrations close one week before the conference or when all places are taken, which ever comes first. Registrations will not be accepted on the day. Any questions? Please contact the conference administrator email: admin@childforum.com

Some Accommodation Options

Along with registration information, some accommodation options are listed on the registration form for the conference at the EVENTS page on the www.childforum.com website.

We do not handle accommodation or travel arrangements. If you are looking at staying within walking distance of the conference venue, seek accommodation that is in the Thorndon area of the City or on The Terrace.

Types of Presentations

The programme contains a mixture of formal paper presentations, interactive presentations and quick talks. Researchers who have prepared a paper for publication or will be submitting their manuscript to the NZ Research in ECE journal are presenting their papers. Some researchers are presenting a discussion of their research which is either in-progress or recently completed. Other researchers are taking the opportunity to quickly let you know about their research or to seek feedback from you on ideas around the research project they are intending to do.

Peer-Reviewers and Editors

Abstracts for formal paper presentations were blind peer-reviewed and all other abstracts were checked by an editor.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and expertise of: Anne Schofield, Cathy Diggins, and Wendy Boyd. Thank you!
Keynote Presentations

Ken Blaiklock

Ken is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education at the Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland.

He teaches courses on developmental psychology, language acquisition, and early literacy.

Ken’s recent publications focus on assessment issues and on international comparisons of early childhood curricula.

Abstract: “Te Whāriki: Rhetoric and Reality”

Early childhood professionals in New Zealand are accustomed to hearing praise for Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum. Praise for the innovative approach of Te Whāriki has come from teachers and academics, nationally and internationally. The Early Childhood Education Taskforce (2011) strongly endorsed Te Whāriki as a model of best practice, claiming “it has proven to be highly successful”. There is, however, little research evidence about the effectiveness or implementation of the curriculum in early childhood centres. This presentation raises questions about the structure and content of Te Whāriki. The holistic and generalised nature of the curriculum means that crucial areas of learning can be overlooked. Concerns are also raised about Learning Stories, the assessment technique that was designed to align with the approach of Te Whāriki. A case is made that we need to re-examine the merits of Te Whāriki and to remain open to what can be learned from curriculum innovations in other nations.

Claire McLachlan

Claire is Associate Professor, Early Years Education at Massey University College of Education, where she teaches courses on language and literacy, children’s thinking and research methods. She has long standing research interests in children’s literacy acquisition, as well as early childhood curriculum, teachers’ beliefs, physical activity and open, distance and flexible learning. Claire has edited and authored a number of leading books and articles.She is currently involved in an HRC funded project on “Healthy homework” in primary schools and further research using coaching and guiding to support teachers’ literacy practices and children’s literacy acquisition in early childhood settings.

Abstract: “Raising the Quality of Literacy Teaching Throughout NZ Early Childhood Services”

Recent research suggests that although teachers have a vital role to play in young children’s literacy acquisition in early childhood services, this does not mean that teachers should engage children in formal, structured, academically oriented programmes before school entry. The research suggests instead that high quality, free play environments with lots of opportunities for literacy play are more effective in supporting literacy, as long as teachers can recognise literacy in action, are aware of children’s individual development and can provide further opportunities for children who may not be displaying the predictors of literacy achievement. A recent ERO review on literacy in early childhood settings (ERO, 2011) suggests there is wide diversity of practice occurring in New Zealand services and that there is insufficient infrastructure in curriculum and policy documents to guide effective and appropriate practice. This session will explore the implications of the recent ERO review and will consider what effective literacy teaching in early childhood would look like and what an early literacy policy in the New Zealand context might contain.
### Thursday’s Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.30 am</td>
<td>St Andrews on the Terrace church doors open from 9 am. Please say hello and chat with others and collect your registration name tag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 – 10.15am</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.15 – 11.00am</td>
<td>Keynote Address: Te Whāriki: Rhetoric and Reality. Dr Ken Blaiklock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00 – 11.30am</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30 – 12.10pm</td>
<td>Paper presentation Collective Storytelling for Teacher Professional Learning: A Research Journey Dr Louise Taylor (CORE Edn) &amp; Julianne Exton (Kids Domain ELC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.10 – 12.50pm</td>
<td>Interactive presentation Researching Children’s Perspectives Cheryl Greenfield (Manukau Institute of Technology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.50 – 1.45pm</td>
<td>Lunch break BYO Lunch and eat in the Hall (tea/coffee avail in the kitchen). Or, enjoy a walk and as we are in the central shopping area many cafés are nearby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.45 – 2.30pm</td>
<td>Interactive presentation Dependent on Dad: A Study on Solo Fathers with Small Children and its Implications for Practice Harald Breiding-Buss &amp; Mark Stephenson (Father &amp; Child Trust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30 – 3.10pm</td>
<td>Paper presentation Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education among Chinese Immigrant and Non-Chinese Parents in New Zealand Qilong Zhang, Dr Louise Keown, &amp; Dr Susan Farruggia (University of Auckland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10 – 3.25pm</td>
<td>Quick talk Issues for Teachers in Working with Indian Immigrant children in New Zealand Early Childhood Centres Vijaya Tatineni (Open Polytechnic of New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.25 – 3.45pm</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.45 – 4.25pm</td>
<td>Paper presentation (Re)Viewing the Landscape Outside the Box: Increasing Student Success by Socioculturally Appropriate Support Janet Moles, Bella Tanielu-Dick, Leautuli Sauvao, Suzanne Ryan, Vera Atiga-Anderson, Viv Browne, Shanali deRose, Jan Ferguson, Heather Fuimaono, Lucy Full-Makaua (Whitireia NZ Centre for Teacher Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.30pm</td>
<td>Evening activities – informal group(s) of those interested in going to a city bar for drinks and eats</td>
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## Friday’s Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00 am</td>
<td>Venue opens. Please collect your name tag if you did not attend Thursday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.30 – 9.45am</td>
<td>Welcome and announcements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.45 -10.15am</td>
<td>Keynote Address: Raising the Quality of Literacy Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associate Professor Claire McLachlan</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.15 – 10.30am</td>
<td>Questions and Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.30 – 11.00am</td>
<td>Morning Tea in the Hall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00 – 11.40am</td>
<td>Breakout Session 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Paper presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Including Everyone in Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thecla Kudakwashe Moffat (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interactive presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Safe from the Start” for Children 0-5 yrs who have Witnessed Domestic Violence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nell Kuilenburg (The Salvation Army, Tasmania)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.45 – 12.25pm</td>
<td>Breakout Session 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paper presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Characteristics of Optimal Spaces &amp; Places in NZ Early Childhood Centres</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cheryl Greenfield (MIT)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Paper presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Can we “do Pikler” in ECE: Self-soothing as a Teaching Strategy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Helen Stewart MacKenzie (EIT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.25 – 1.15pm</td>
<td>Lunch Break. BYO Lunch and eat in the Hall (tea/coffee avail in the kitchen). Many cafes are nearby.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.15 – 1.45pm</td>
<td>Breakout Session 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quick talks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A Qualitative Study of Sun Protection in Teacher–led Early Childhood Centres</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mary Duignan (Otago University)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interactive presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Baking Soda and Vinegar: Exploring Scientific Literacy in Early Childhood</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Karen Miller (NZTC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.50 – 2.30pm</td>
<td>Breakout Session 4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paper presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Being Agreeable – Communication Among the Team of Adults who Plan a Child’s Individual Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesley Dunn (Special Education, Ministry of Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interactive presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotionally Intelligent ECE Teachers Supporting Children’s Emotional Competence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Ulloa, Ian Evans &amp; Linda Jones (Massey University, Wgtn)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.35 – 3.10pm</td>
<td>Breakout Session 5</td>
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<td>Interactive presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘Children as Teachers’: Creating Opportunities for Children to Share their Expertise with their Peers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Penny Smith (Massey University)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quick talks</td>
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<td>Perspectives of ECE Student Teachers from India</td>
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<td>Dr Lata Rana (NZTC)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Less Talking more Walking – Gifted Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Melanie Wong &amp; Jens. J. Hansen</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Manukau Institute of Technology &amp; Woodhill Park)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.10 – 3.45pm</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.45 – 4.25pm</td>
<td>Interactive presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Can’t Understand a Word he Says”: What do Educators Know about the Impact of Communication Difficulties on Participation and Learning?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jo Davies (Ministry of Education), Dr Thomas Klee (University of Canterbury) &amp; Dr Elizabeth Doell (Ministry of Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.30pm</td>
<td>Evening activities – informal groups of those interested in going to (a) a city bar for drinks and eats, (b) a walking tour of the city</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Saturday’s Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00 am</td>
<td>Conference venue opens. Come to the Conference building behind the Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9.30 am - 10.10 am | Breakout Session 6  
Interactive presentation  
Evaluation for Improvement: ERO and Self Review  
Sandra Collins & Mary-Louise Stocker (Education Review Office)  
Interactive presentation  
Developing Autonomy in Students as ‘Change Agents’ through Undergraduate ECE Research  
Dr Bill Hagan & Lin Howie (Manukau Institute of Technology) |
| 10.10 – 10.30am | Morning Tea in the Upstairs Kitchen and Conference Rooms                                           |
| 10.30 – 11.10 am | Breakout Session 7  
Interactive presentation  
Assessment Alternatives and Examples of International Practice  
Ken Blaiklock (UNITEC)  
Interactive presentation  
Paid or Voluntary in Field Based Practicum: Does it Make a difference?  
Cheryl McConnell (Eastern Institute of Technology) |
| 11.15 – 11.50 | Interactive presentation  
Unpacking Creativity within the Kindergarten Environment  
Jo Dean & Keri Cheetham (Milverton Kindergarten, Ruahine Kindergarten Association) |
| 11.50am around 12.15/12.30pm | Spot prizes and surprises !!!!!  
Conference ends                                                                 |
Formal Paper Presentations (Peer-Reviewed)

Being Agreeable? A Critical Examination of Communication Among the Team of Adults who Meet Together to Plan for a Child’s Individual Programme (IP) in an Early Childhood Centre
Lesley Dunn (Special Education, Ministry of Education)

Each child with an inclusive early intervention programme in New Zealand has a team of adults whose task is to prepare an individual plan (IP) that will support that child’s potential as a learner in their early childhood education setting. The team comprises the child’s parent(s), teachers, early intervention specialists, and education support worker (teacher-aide). This paper describes their difficulties in communicating with each other. In this qualitative case study, members of three such teams were asked to meet eight times across twelve months to discuss and plan their work together. Each participant was interviewed individually after every second meeting to find out their views on what their team was doing. The data, from detailed meeting notes, transcribed interviews, and existing written documentation, was studied using the model of community of practice as a tool for analysis. The findings described in this paper are part of a wider doctoral study about the teams’ interactions. Issues arising from the study included professional influence as an effect of the uneven knowledge base within the teams, the way beliefs about inclusion and Te Whāriki affected decision making, the influence of joint work on new learning for individuals, communication patterns, and the way in which all issues were interrelated. This paper focuses on the teams’ communication repertoire. A major finding, common to the three teams, was that participants communicated in a way that inhibited individual and group-wide learning. This paper offers an interesting opportunity to identify communication restraints, which if recognised and mitigated, could better support outcomes for children and stakeholders in inclusive early intervention teams in New Zealand.

Key references:


Can we “do Pikler” in ECE: Self-soothing as a Teaching Strategy
Helen Stewart MacKenzie (EIT Hawkes Bay)

This presentation reports on a small study which took a critical look at the current and popular ‘trend’ of embracing ideas from Emmi Pikler in infant centres in Aotearoa New Zealand. Fifteen infant teachers from a range of centres catering for infants (full-day mixed age centres, infant-only centres and kindergartens) were asked to share their understandings of specific theory (Bowlby, Ainsworth), approaches (Pikler, Gerber) and research (Pikler, Brazelton and Dalli). The participants generally considered Pikler’s ideas to be ground-breaking and innovative. Enthusiasm for applying what is popularly called ‘the Pikler approach’ as a set of teaching strategies was clear, with a particular emphasis on the principle of respect. However, how these ideas (developed in an orphanage in Hungary) translate into teaching strategy was unclear, especially around the application of “self-soothing” (where an infant develops coping skills using their own resources to calm themselves without adult assistance). Analysis of participant responses highlighted four main themes as integral to working with infants in non-parental care: love, trust, respect and relationships. A significant implication from this project is strengthening teacher knowledge of theory informing practice – especially when a method like “self-soothing” is embraced as a teaching strategy. The project incorporated a literature search, an interview and subsequent analysis. To validate the voice of participants, an interpretative approach was brought to qualitative research methodology.

Key references:


Including Everyone in Early Childhood Education
Thecla Kudakwashe Moffat, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

This research explores families/whānau and teachers/kaiako perspectives and practice of inclusion in early childhood education (ECE). It also seeks to find out whether teachers and staff in ECE centres practise what they say they do. A mixed method case study approach was used to find out how two ECE settings meet children's individual education needs. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative data collecting methods was used in this study. It presents the research findings from questionnaires, focus group interviews, documentation analysis and observations. The research explored examples of inclusion in the two case study centres. Parents of children with diverse needs and teachers were participants in this study. In case study A, 15 parent questionnaires and 5 teacher questionnaires were returned. 5 teachers and four parents participated in the focus group. 17 children were observed and had their learning stories examined. In case study B, 20 parent questionnaires and 5 teacher questionnaires were returned. 4 teachers and 5 parents participated in the focus group. 20 children were observed and had their learning stories examined. In both cases the centre philosophy and policy document were analysed. Data collection method was carried over a two months period for each setting. Meeting the needs of individual children and their parents/whānau was a measure of successful inclusion. The findings revealed that inclusion can be a success in early childhood education if well managed. It was concluded that, working in partnership with parents, collaboration and communication, the quality of teacher child interaction and having an inclusive philosophy, clear set policies and procedures that teachers naturally follow help to make inclusive education happen. The attitudes of the partners in an early childhood setting also define what happens in the centre. The successes and challenges along the way are highlighted, so that other educational services across sectors may learn from them.

Key references:


Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education among Chinese Immigrant and Non-Chinese Parents in New Zealand

Qilong Zhang, Louise Keown, & Susan Farruggia (University of Auckland)

This presentation will report findings of a completed doctoral study which compared Chinese and non-Chinese parents on parental involvement in kindergarten. Survey data were obtained from 247 parents (120 Chinese, 127 non-Chinese) from 50 public kindergartens in the Auckland region. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 head teachers and 50 parents (25 Chinese, 25 non-Chinese). Results suggest that Chinese parents scored lower than non-Chinese parents on all parental involvement dimensions except for helping the child's learning at home. Multiple regression analyses revealed that, for the whole sample, role construction and self-efficacy were important predictors of all parental involvement categories except for helping with the child's learning at home. For the Chinese sample, opportunities for involvement, the parent's highest qualification and English proficiency were main predictors of parental involvement. Teacher and parent interviews corroborated these findings, based on which the presenter will briefly discuss some important implications for ECE practice e.g., purpose of parental involvement, parent-teacher relationship, involving minority immigrant parents, and parent outreach programs etc.

Key references:


Collective Storytelling for Teacher Professional Learning: A Research Journey

Dr Louise Taylor (CORE Edn) & Julianne Exton (Kids Domain ELC)

This presentation traces the journey of Kids' Domain (Auckland) through a three year action research project undertaken as part of their professional learning. This self-funded research was shaped around teacher collective storytelling where the objective was to understand the self, others and teaching differently. Action research was chosen because the practical, cyclic, and reflective nature of this methodology allowed for changes to occur throughout the duration of the project (Taylor, 2010). Action research is about creating social change and was particularly suitable for a project of this kind (Carr & Kemmis, 2002). The research was situated within poststructuralist feminist theory which celebrates the multiple and contradictory, and values subjectivity as a valid form of knowing. Furthermore, poststructuralist feminist studies aim to disrupt the taken-for-granted, challenge discriminatory practice and contribute towards social justice and equity, which this research does (Belenky, et al., 1997; Davies, 2000; MacNaughton, 2000). When teachers shared together, they came face-to-face with their own and others contradictory storylines which highlighted how precious, yet fragile, these were. With this came the realisation that storylines can be disrupted, and rewritten (Davies 2006). Being challenged by one another’s experiences and perspectives created shifts in thinking and this impacted on both relationships and teaching practice. This study does not make universal claims, nor has it sought outcomes that can be reproduced; instead the focus has been on change at a local level. Nevertheless the story about how one centre experienced personal and professional change through a process of collective storytelling is worth hearing.
Key references:


(Re)Viewing the Landscape Outside the Box: Increasing Student Success by Socioculturally Appropriate Support

Janet Moles, Bella Tanielu-Dick, Leautuli Sauvao, Suzanne Ryan, Vera Atiga-Anderson, Viv Browne, Shanali deRose, Jan Ferguson, Heather Fuimaono, Lucy Fuli-Makaua (Whitireia Polytechnic)

This paper draws from a triangulated study that has investigated the effectiveness of support and guidance strategies for teacher education lecturers to use for increasing student success. The study is being carried out by lecturers who are delivering the three year Bachelor of Teaching (ECE) degree to a multicultural student cohort, in a New Zealand polytechnic. The data were gathered by action research, questionnaires and interviews with students. Even in the early stages of this study, the reflections of lecturers have revealed some relevant and significant findings about factors that appear to be effective in strengthening students’ understandings of new material and different understandings about learning and teaching. This paper will, therefore, discuss strategies for scaffolding students through paradigm shifts and the link between appropriate levels of pastoral support and student achievement.

Characteristics of Optimal Spaces & Places in NZ Early Childhood Centres

Cheryl Greenfield (Manukau Institute of Technology)

A presentation of the findings from qualitative research undertaken with 15 New Zealand early childhood centres and 46 teachers who worked in the participating centres. This project was carried out by the Manukau Institute of Technology Early Childhood Education Outdoor Reference Group, with Cheryl Greenfield as the lead researcher. The purpose of this research was to investigate examples of what teachers deemed was excellent or optimal, in their outdoor environment provision, across a range of New Zealand early childhood education and care centres; and why. A further purpose was to discover, if early childhood teachers shared any common understandings of what is optimal outdoor environment provision in New Zealand. Procedures included a questionnaire, photography and the participating centres Education Review Office reports. The teachers’ responses, in spite of a wide diversity of participant centres, evidenced a shared common understanding of what makes for an optimal outdoor environment while still incorporating features unique to that centre/community context. Optimal outdoor provision was clearly seen to be underpinned by the threads of ‘relationships’ and ‘opportunities’. The two threads wove through the eight themes or characteristics of optimal outdoor provisions that emerged. These threads and characteristics have been used to produce a possible framework from which early childhood services could self review their outdoor area and their provision of outdoor play.
Interactive Presentations

Assessment Alternatives and Examples of International Practice
Ken Blaiklock (UNITEC)

The assessment of children’s learning should be based on carefully recorded observations of children engaged in a wide range of experiences. This session will first examine concerns about the effectiveness of Learning Stories for recording and interpreting children’s learning. An alternative approach to assessment known as Learning Notes will then be presented. A comparison of Learning Stories and Learning Notes will be made in relation to key principles of assessment. Examples of early childhood assessment practices in California and England will also be discussed.

Unpacking Creativity within the Kindergarten Environment
Jo Dean & Keri Cheetham (Milverton Kindergarten, Ruahine Kindergartens Association)

This research proposes that for children to survive in the 21st century they need creative skills and thinking strategies. Therefore as early childhood educators we need to be building these skills and learning through many different experiences and giving children opportunities to test out new ideas, share knowledge, learn how to learn and reflect on learning. Our research question is “How can early childhood teachers best support children to develop critical skills for creative thinking and learning?”

As early childhood teachers we attended workshops facilitated by Professor Guy Claxton and Sir Ken Robinson on this topic and have continued to explore it through professional reading and other workshops and conferences. We studied how our four year old children applied creative thinking strategies across a wide range of learning areas, using a variety of data collection techniques. This included observations, informal discussions with family and whānau, photos, narrative assessments, recording of children’s narratives, planning meetings and a parent information evening. We are now drawing on this data to evaluate our teaching and develop strategies that work for strengthening children’s abilities to articulate their thoughts and thinking processes. As Sir Ken Robinson says, “Everyone is born with tremendous capacity for creativity, the trick is to develop these capacities” (2009, p. 56).

Paid or Voluntary in Field Based Practicum: Does it make a Difference?
Cheryl McConnell (Eastern Institute of Technology)

This small case study analysed the extent to which a continuous practicum contributed to student teachers’ professional development in one Field Based Teacher Education (FBTE) Diploma Programme. Data was generated using individual interviews with four graduate teachers, reflective journals from five teacher educators’ and questionnaires from 26 peer support teachers. The results suggest, regardless of the student teachers’ status as a volunteer or in paid employment for their FBTE practicum, the attitude of the team may either constrain or create opportunities for student teachers’ learning. When certain conditions are met, the continuous nature of the practicum provides legitimate connections and authentic participation in the social, cultural and political dimensions of an early childhood setting (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Whitcomb, Borko & Liston, 2009). This research provides a basis for early childhood teaching teams to engage in conversations about attitudes and beliefs that best support student teacher learning (Fenwick, 2003; Overton, 2009).
“Can’t Understand a Word he Says”: What do Educators Know about the Impact of Communication Difficulties on Participation and Learning?
Jo Davies (Ministry of Education), Dr Thomas Klee (University of Canterbury) & Dr Elizabeth Doell (Ministry of Education)

This presentation will discuss the validity of “parent and educator concern” as indicators of need for speech and language support drawing on recent international literature review, along with a pilot study from New Zealand. The presentation will report on the findings of the pilot study which included face to face structured interviews with parents and structured telephone interviews with educators. The parent and educator interview information is compared to the Speech-Language Therapist’s comprehensive assessment across a range of factors. The factors are; the child’s presenting communication difficulty, participation, learning, wellbeing, and the knowledge and skills of the parents and educators to support the child. The presentation will provide answers to the question: Is information gained through structured parent and educator interviews a valid indicator of a child’s need for speech-language services? Additionally, the presentation will explore the issue of what information and skills educators need to identify and support young children with communication delays and disorders.

Developing Autonomy in Students as ‘Change Agents’ through Undergraduate ECE Research
Dr Bill Hagan & Lin Howie (Manukau Institute of Technology)

Over the past year, the Manukau Institute of Technology Bachelors degree in ECE has undergone changes to the delivery of a one semester final year paper. This field-based teacher education programme has always had a strong emphasis on developing practice through the two forms of practicum (teaching practice and field-based training). The course Practice Based Research aims to not only teach, but provide mentoring and supervision in order to develop critical skills and knowledge required to carry out research as a teacher of young children. Students are required to carry out a small case study, action research or appreciative inquiry project in their home centre from the research proposal to the final report, and the findings are also presented back to the class. This course focuses on understanding research as a creative process through the application of academic and research skills using a qualitative research approach. Kaupapa Māori and Pasifika methodology is also a component of the research knowledge required. The use of the web based student learning system has been enhanced through the use of wimba technology to provide students with further reading and support in each of these methodologies, as well as the use of template proposals that include proposed project design and a timeline chart. Each student is assigned a staff member as a supervisor, and staff are available for individual and/or group supervision. For most students, this research project gives them an opportunity to design and/or implement a change in their centre that they either work in or are a volunteer, and several students have presented their work at the annual MIT Research symposium along with staff. Implications for future delivery will also be discussed.

Evaluation for Improvement: ERO and Self Review
Sandra Collins & Mary-Louise Stocker (Education Review Office)

This presentation will explore the concept of complementary evaluation (the relationship between internal and external evaluation) in the context of ERO’s review of its methodology for education reviews in early childhood services. We will look at how external review and self review can contribute to improved practice and raising quality in the sector. And, we will share with participants the future direction of ERO’s work in ECE and the place of self review in complementing this work. This presentation will be of interest to teachers, managers, professional development providers, and those with an interest in policy development.
Baking Soda and Vinegar: Exploring Scientific Literacy in Early Childhood
Karen Miller (NZ Tertiary College)

This presentation explores promoting scientific literacy through supporting children’s developing working theories. Scientific literacy involves understanding scientific terminology and concepts, together with using critical thinking and problem solving skills to evaluate scientific knowledge and discoveries. Research into practical ways to support development of children’s scientific literacy was carried out with teachers at a small full day centre in South Auckland. There were three phases: an initial focus group to explore current practice, a professional development session to provide content knowledge and encourage engagement and a second focus group for feedback about the impact of the intervention. The professional development promoted teaching practice which supported scientifically based working theories and scientific literacy through a multi modal perspective on literacy. Findings indicated that a scientific focus provoked teacher interest, recognition of where science was already happening within the programme and enthusiasm to develop this learning area. This implies that personalised intervention at centre level is an effective way to validate existing good practice and increase the level of teacher engagement, enthusiasm and expertise in supporting their scientific literacy and that of the children they work with.

Dependent on Dad: A Study on Solo Fathers with Small Children and its Implications for Practice
Harald Breiding-Buss & Brendon Smith (Father & Child Trust)

Solo fathers are an ‘invisible’ group in society, although Census data suggests they make up almost 5% of families in New Zealand. No research other than a review of Census data in 1999 has been done on this family type in New Zealand, and there is also very little published research overseas, especially where it includes young children. This is of concern as it implies that there are a substantial number of children in New Zealand whose living circumstances we know nothing about. Father & Child Trust has recently concluded a small study on 13 solo fathers with children 0-8 years of age, where there is little or no mother involvement. The fathers were interviewed on a range of subjects, including their parenting, issues for their children and themselves, their views on fatherhood, and the effectiveness of parenting services. The sample of solo fathers covered in our study was quite young (24 on average at the time of the birth of the child), with low educational and income status, and the majority became solo fathers because of parenting failure by the children’s mothers and after state intervention. There were strong signs of low social connectedness, inconsistent parenting, depression and emotional stress, which would all contribute to the low ‘presence’ of this family type in New Zealand society. This presentation discusses the implications of solo fatherhood (and involved fatherhood in general) for working with families.

‘Children as Teachers’: Creating Opportunities for Children to Share their Expertise with their Peers
Penny Smith (Massey University)

In early childhood settings young children have numerous opportunities to closely interact with their peers in a play based environment. Play takes a central role and is the vehicle by which children can collectively challenge and extend each other’s thinking. Current accounts of how children learn and develop recognise the importance of peer interactions in this process. The study presented here explores how children worked together collaboratively and as peer tutors in two early childhood centres. The study, a 2010 Master’s thesis, investigated the strategies which children adopted when teaching their peers and examined the role of the teacher and the learning environment in supporting collaborative endeavour. In this presentation I will share the strategies that children adopted as peer tutors, including suggestions for how teachers can support collaborative endeavour and provide meaningful opportunities for children to teach their peers.
‘Safe from the Start’ for Children aged 0-5 who have Witnessed Domestic Violence
Nell Kuilenburg (The Salvation Army, Tasmania)

In this presentation I will share our experience of how change for young children can be effected through research – and a lot of hard work! Safe from the Start is an innovative, highly successful and Australian project initiated by The Salvation Army and developed in partnership with two universities and women’s refuges. It addresses how to respond to children who have witnessed domestic violence. Dr Erica Bell conducted the ‘States of Mind’ research that considered the specific needs of children aged 0-5 who have witnessed family violence, living in refuges. And, in a research project for Safe from the Start by Dr Angela Spinney it was demonstrated that children who are exposed to violence in the early years can suffer severe effects on brain development and have an increased risk of adopting violent behaviour, addictions to alcohol and drugs and mental health issues later in life. The research found that working therapeutically within an early intervention approach can decrease these risks and the report recommended a training module for workers and a resource kit. Following this, the Safe from the Start resource kit was developed. It includes books, DVD, CD, puppets and activity cards sourced from the UK, US, Canada and Australia. A ‘train the trainer’ programme has also been developed and this is now provided in all Australian states. An Aboriginal and culturally and Linguistically Diverse Kit is currently being developed in partnership with Swinburne University.

Researching Children’s Perspectives
Cheryl Greenfield (Manukau Institute of Technology)

The provocation of social constructivist theory challenges researchers to consider and explore innovative ways to position ourselves so that the multiple voices of children can be heard, valued, respected and listened to. This presentation will review how some researchers have included children’s voices in their work and invites you to share your experiences, questions, and thoughts on this. The discussion will cover qualitative research methodology and the use also of nonverbal research tools like drawing and photography as ways for the more reserved children to share their interests and views.

Emotionally Intelligent ECE teachers Supporting Children’s Emotional Competence
Maria Ulloa, Ian Evans and Linda Jones (Massey University, Wellington)

This thesis examined a variety of sources of influence for enhancing the capacity to develop emotional competence in preschool children. Its general purpose was on how teachers create classroom atmospheres that promote positive emotional development. Specifically, this research investigated the teachers’ ability to implement strategies to facilitate children’s emotional communications in order to generate synchronous relationships that allow emotional competence through language and other cognitive processes. Emotional interactions, strategies used by teachers for promoting emotional socialisation, and emotional atmospheres of Early Childhood Education (ECE) classrooms are inter-linked, since the general emotional atmosphere allows teachers to be more mindful, less reactive, and more strategic in responding to children’s emotions. The first phase of the research involved a naturalistic observation study in three culturally diverse preschool settings over a 10-week period. The second phase consisted of a randomised controlled trial with 30 early childhood teachers. Half of the teachers were taught strategies to enhance their own and the children’s emotional competence. The controls were provided standard information regarding children’s development. The results of both studies highlighted the processes through which teachers support emotional competence of young children, and the importance of the role of teachers on socialisation of children’s emotions. Most importantly, it gave evidence, on the influence of emotion focused teacher training in supporting teachers’ emotional skills so they can optimally meet the emotional needs of children. This research has powerful implications for preschoolers’ mental health, educational practice, and policies aiming to protect children from previous or future risk exposure. It also contributes to the integration of psychological and educational research on the role of teachers as agents of the emotion socialisation in young children.
Quick Talks

Edible Gardens in Early Childhood Education Services
Anna Dawson (Cancer Society Social and Behavioural Research Unit)

Gardening interventions for children have been shown to support positive health and educational outcomes. There is little information available, however, about gardening within early childhood centre settings. The aim of this study was to explore the presence and role of edible gardens in such settings. A postal questionnaire was sent to a randomly selected national sample of managers/head teachers in centres. Of the 211 responses received (55% response rate), 71% of centres had edible gardens, incorporating vegetables, berry fruit, tree fruit, edible flowers and nut trees. Garden activities were linked with teaching across all five strands of the NZ early childhood curriculum. In addition, 34% provided cooking lessons or recipes using garden produce and 30% linked the garden with messages about increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. Most gardens were established in the past 2 years and relied on financial and non-financial support from parents, teachers and community organisations. Barriers to having a garden included a lack of funding, space, time and staff support. The study findings suggest that gardens are used as a versatile teaching tool in many NZ early childhood centres.

Perspectives of ECE Student Teachers from India
Dr Lata Rana (New Zealand Tertiary College)

NZ society is comprised of a variety of cultural backgrounds and languages. We are seeing more students than ever before coming to NZ to train to be early childhood teachers. This presentation discusses a study of the perspectives of seven Indian born early childhood student teachers about their adjustment to the NZ context. The findings of the first phase of the project will be shared and plans for the next phase will be discussed. Results highlighted some major issues around the themes of cultural adjustment; the importance of being an Indian and the Indian culture; understandings of biculturalism; discourse of difference and otherness and early childhood education in India and New Zealand. The next phase of the study will be to investigate further the enculturation of the same seven Indian student teachers and their understandings of biculturalism after completing more than one year of early childhood studies in New Zealand.

Issues for Teachers in Working with Indian Immigrant children in New Zealand Early Childhood Centres
Vijaya Tatineni (Open Polytechnic of New Zealand)

Early childhood education is getting more and more complex with increasing numbers of both children and parents for whom English is a second language. Teachers trained in NZ, whilst recognised for their global thinking, need better skills to create curricula and shape programmes that are inclusive and culturally sensitive – both mandatory requirements in the New Zealand’s ECE curriculum, Te Whariki. While educating children from multicultural backgrounds, teachers often face a number of dilemmas. They experience uncertainty as to whether to include or exclude a learning activity for fear of giving offence. They are often unsure whether to cater to the demands of parental expectations or work as a teacher with their own aspirations for children, when the two seem to conflict – a dilemma compounded by challenges in communicating with those parents. This is particularly so when working with Indian immigrant parents as most of them believe that the teacher has full responsibility for their children’s learning in early childhood and their role as parents is confined to giving the teacher full support to get on with that job. These dilemmas are not unique to any one cultural group, of course. However, to limit the scope of my enquiry, I opted to focus on Indian immigrants, not least because of my own background, training and experience in early childhood education in both India and New Zealand. This presentation, which prefaces work on a doctoral thesis, will consider some of these dilemmas and provide an opportunity for interactive discussion on potential solutions.
Less Talking more Walking
Melanie Wong (Manukau Institute of Technology) & Dr Jens. J. Hansen (Woodhill Park Research Retreat)

This presentation explores the extent to which gifted education policy for early childhood contexts provides government support for early childhood teachers, children and whānau. The New Zealand Government acknowledges that like other students, gifted and talented students also need appropriate educational opportunities. This means that, in principle at least, the Government supports all children's needs (Ministry of Education, 2008) and hence it should also support gifted and talented students. Education policy should, therefore, underpin the recognition of gifted learners as well as guarantying the delivery of appropriate learning programmes and services. Policy emphasises that teaching practices must meet and extend the learning needs of gifted learners within primary school classroom but no policy edict has been specifically made for early childhood education. A working party, established in May 2001 was charged with showing Governmental commitment to supporting the gifted and talented students (Porter, 2004). In 2001 Government published its gifted and talented education policy but notably, the policy did not emphasis children from the early childhood sector (The Working Party of Gifted Education, 2001). To determine beliefs as opposed to policy in action, a documentary analysis of the New Zealand Government's gifted and talented education policy was completed. This involved reviewing government and other web sites, publications and appropriate online resources. All were downloaded and examined for policies pertaining to gifted and talented education especially that emphasising early childhood learning. We will share and discuss our findings which in short show that insofar as Gifted and Talented education is concerned, the Government still needs to learn to walk their talk.

A Qualitative Study of Sun Protection in Teacher–led Early Childhood Centres
Mary Duignan (for Masters of Public Health degree Otago University)

The presentation will report on a qualitative study of sun protection in New Zealand teacher-led early childhood centres recently undertaken as a dissertation for a Masters of Public Health degree from Otago University (with financial support from the Cancer Society of New Zealand). Excessive UVR exposure during childhood increases the lifetime risk of skin cancer. Children are potentially exposed to high levels of UVR in the early childhood care setting. Firstly, the presentation will briefly cover relevant international evidence on sun protection in early childhood centres. This will be followed by the findings of the current research which briefly examined sun protection policies and practices, and identified important underlying factors and key steps to support effective sun protection. The research used systematic literature review; ten key informant interviews; documentary analysis; and website review. The key findings indicate that while some effective sun protection practices were being implemented, others fell significantly short of best practice recommendations. Some sun protection policies, lacked detail and did not cover the full range of recommended sun protection practices. The presentation will look at key factors identified in the research, that influence sun protection in this setting, and discuss recommendations to address these influences in order to support sun protection in early childhood services. Early childhood services need support to implement effective sun protection which is a cost effective opportunity to promote a healthy future for children.