

# ESW Newsletter

TERM 4 2013



Wow, it is Term 4 already and with only ten weeks to the end of your contracts for 2013, the time will go by very quickly. Daylight saving has started which gives us longer days and an indication that summer is on its way and maybe an opportunity to go for a walk at Hamilton Lake. It is great to see the blossoms on the trees and new growth on the shrubs and vines. We hope that you had time to relax and put your feet up in the holidays and are now ready for another fun and busy term at the early childhood centres.

A quote to reflect on: ***“Teachers plant seeds of knowledge that grow forever”***  
*Anonymous*

## Dates to Remember

- ✚ **Term 4 dates:** The term commences on 14 October 2013 and the last day for contracts is 20 December 2013. This is not necessarily the last day of the term for the Early Childhood Centres.
- ✚ **Labour Day**, which is a public holiday, is Monday 28 October 2013.
- ✚ The ESW workshop will be 13 December 2013 12.30-2.30pm. There will be a quiz around the topics that have been presented in the past. Also afternoon tea will be provided, so mark the date in your diary so that you don't forget.
- ✚ **Performance Appraisals-** any that haven't been completed prior to then will be completed at the workshop. Think about a goal you would like to achieve in 2014 and reflect on your performance and goal/s for 2013. These will be discussed with you at your appraisal.
- ✚ **Family End of Year Party:** Thursday 19 December 2013, 11am-1pm. You are all welcome to come along and celebrate with the families.



## House Keeping

- ✚ **Communication Journals:** Don't forget to sign your entries and to write in the journal daily. When the journal is not available, please write on a piece of paper and place it in the child's bag. Remember to keep your entries positive, some days will be challenging but this does not need to be shared by you, the centre staff will do this should they feel that it is necessary. Refer to page 10 of your Information booklet.
- ✚ Adhere to your contracted times, all changes need to be made in consultation with McKenzie Centre.
- ✚ **Time sheets:** Complete them daily as this should cut down on mistakes such as taking leave without pay but then writing it on the time sheet as worked. Please assist the administration team by minimising the errors, getting your time sheets in on time, having one week per page and completing the relevant boxes e.g. LWOP, Sick Leave

(SL) correctly to avoid any misunderstanding. Completing your time sheets is your responsibility, not that of the admin team.

- You all have new name badges, please remember to wear them while working in the early childhood centres, this identifies who you work for and your name, there are often relievers working in the early childhood centres.

### **Staff Travel:**

Trisha Bengé, Centre Director; Anita Wilson, Speech Language Therapist and Richard Edghill, Psychologist have all recently been on overseas trips. This caused minimal disruption to the families who were supported by other team members and Jacqui Kay-Smith being employed as a locum for Anita's role. Their journeys to other parts of the world have been inspirational, fun and extended their life experiences.

### **Review:**

The Ministry of Education did a Specialist Services review 9-11 September 2013 at McKenzie Centre. We received a fabulous result in all of the eight areas reviewed, which was an indication of all the hard work and commitment given by the team at McKenzie Centre. There were no recommendations for changes or improvements. Helen Stevens, MOE said that very few places get a full complement of meeting all the requirements in all of the eight areas and no recommendations. A wonderful achievement.

### **Way to Play Programme:**

This is a one day introduction to playing with children on the Autism Spectrum. The programme offers simple, easy to use strategies to begin playing with the child.

Way to Play Waikato will be on 4 November 2013. Please look on the attached website for further information. [www.autismnz.org.nz](http://www.autismnz.org.nz). An interesting article from Issue No. 33 of "The Space" magazine is attached.

### **Staffing changes:**

Unfortunately, we say goodbye to a longstanding and valued member of the team, Ursula, who has been an Early Intervention Teacher at McKenzie Centre for 16 years. She will be missed by staff and families and we wish her the best for her next endeavours. Her last day is Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>.

Stephanie Wacker will be commencing at McKenzie Centre on 5 November 2013 and she will be working as an Early Intervention Teacher.

### **McKenzie Centre Website**

You will find our Parent and ESW newsletters online so you can keep up to date with us now and in the future: [www.mckenziecentre.nzl.org](http://www.mckenziecentre.nzl.org)

Lillian does a great job of updating the website. Take a look! Have a look at the family newsletter each term to keep you up to date with Centre news.

We are also on Facebook - have a look and 'like us'.

Remember to contact us if you have any concerns or questions at any time. We are always happy to hear from you. Have a great term!

### **Phone Extensions**

Helen Gempton	ext 702, Business Manager
Lillian Martin	ext 702, Office Coordinator
Anita Wilson	ext 703, Speech Language Therapist
Suzanne Kok	ext 704, Early Intervention Teacher
Ursula Rapley	ext 706, Early Intervention Teacher
Sue Scott	ext 706, Physiotherapist
Estelle Pretorius	ext 707, Speech Language Therapist
Claire Hintz	ext 708, Occupational Therapist
Trisha Bengé	ext 710, Centre Director
Teresa Blake	ext 712, Early Intervention Teacher

## Useful Websites

[www.suelarkey.com](http://www.suelarkey.com)  
[www.autismhouse.org.nz](http://www.autismhouse.org.nz)  
[www.downsyndrome.co.nz](http://www.downsyndrome.co.nz)  
[www.pushplay.org.nz](http://www.pushplay.org.nz)  
[www.downsyndrome.co.nz](http://www.downsyndrome.co.nz)

[www.pushplay.org.nz](http://www.pushplay.org.nz)  
[www.asdguidelines.com](http://www.asdguidelines.com)  
[www.nzgg.org.nz/asd](http://www.nzgg.org.nz/asd)  
[www.asdguidelines.com](http://www.asdguidelines.com)



As well as:

Ministry of Education, Special Education  
Hamilton City Council  
Norah Howell Trust  
Freemasons  
John Illott Trust  
Gallagher Charitable Trust  
Gull Community Grants  
Ministry of Social Development

Ministry of Health  
COGS (Dept. of Internal Affairs)  
Page Trust  
WDFK Karamu Trust  
Todd Foundation  
ANZ Staff Foundation  
Talking Tech Foundation  
Tidd Foundation

Lotteries Community Fund  
Community Post  
Walt Disney - Handy Manny Trust Waikato  
Sir John Logan Campbell Trust  
Community Post  
Frozen Funds Trust  
AXA Hearts in Action  
CJB Norwood Trust

And our donors and sponsors (private donors names not published for privacy reasons)

Southwell School Chapel fund  
Cooper Aitken and Partners  
Stace Hammond Barristers & Solicitors  
Proform Plastics  
Crombie Lockwood  
True Colours  
Everest Airconditioning Ltd  
Ingham  
BNZ Closed for Good  
CF Reese Plumbing  
Packaging House  
Novus  
Blakes Hire Company  
The Lawrenson Group  
AON New Zealand

Hamilton City Hawks  
Spike @School  
X3 Utility Services  
BNZ partners  
Fusion Print Group Ltd  
Lollipop's Playland  
Countdown Te Awamutu  
Business Enabling Systems Ltd  
Fonterra Co-operative Group Te Rapa  
Lido Cinema  
Friends of McKenzie Centre  
St Francis Charitable Trust Board  
Ricoh  
Gilmours

Artworx  
U-Leisure  
New World Te Rapa  
Andrew Malcolm  
hr connect  
Waikato Geely  
Countdown Hamilton Central  
Stragglers Rod & Kustom  
The Olde Creamery Café, Kaipaki  
Metro Motors  
Waikato Diocesan School for Girls  
New World Rototuna  
Kiwani Westside Club

Paper for this newsletter was kindly supplied by:





Neil Stuart:

# Way to play - A question of trust

## Playing with children on the Autism Spectrum

If you can imagine for one moment that you are walking down a strange street in an unfamiliar town and it's getting dark. Up ahead you see a man you don't know and he's beckoning you to walk down a dark alley with him. Would you go? My guess is that you wouldn't. In fact you would probably feel highly anxious, you might try and avert your eyes and you may, in fact walk in the other direction. On the other hand if you recognised the man as someone you trusted, and someone you have had good times with, then you might be tempted to see what is down the dark alley!

For many young children on the Autism Spectrum when we say, "hey, come and play", they are indeed faced with a dark alley, as they have not yet built a relationship of trust.

With increasing numbers of children with Autism in early childhood centres, it is ever more likely that staff will be coming into contact with them and wonder, "How can I play with this child?" However a more pertinent question might be, "How do I develop the sort of relationship that motivates children with Autism to take on challenging situations?"

We know the sorts of situations children with autism will find challenging and which they will find easy. When activities are ordered and expectations are clear, there is repetition and a pattern, the child copes easily. But more unpredictable, spontaneous situations are more challenging. Play falls into this second situation. This makes play challenging not only for the child with Autism but also for the adult who is trying to play with the child.

Typically developing children learn to become resilient in challenging situations by referencing and trusting their caregivers or more competent peers. For children with Autism, who don't 'get' the importance of social information, they rely on themselves and want to stay doing the same things.

The bottom line is that success for children with autism is best measured in the development of relationships of trust.

Using a child's strengths it is possible to follow some simple strategies to begin the process of relationship development. We call this the **Way to Play**.

### Relationship development through play

#### 1. Patterns

The adult creates activities with clear, simple patterns that the child is able to take part in. Both the adult and the child have active roles. They begin a 'dance' together where both are fully involved and dependent on each other. A child with Autism is more likely to take part in a pattern as they can easily predict what will happen next.

#### 2. Variations

The adult establishes himself as the guide by introducing slight variations to the patterns. The patterns are the same but slightly different. These just noticeable differences are the child's introduction to flexible thinking.

#### 3. Memory Catchphrase

The adult creates a catchphrase used within the pattern to create a positive memory for the child. Children with autism have difficulty drawing on positive memories of previous experiences. By creating, emphasising and subsequently reintroducing positive memories of interactions the child is more likely to want to engage with the adult again.

#### 4. Being the guide

The adult's intention is to lead the interaction and understands that if left to the child the pattern would remain the same. The guide's role is not to force or direct the child, but to establish co-dependence within the patterns. The guide knows what to ignore and what to include in the changes.

#### 5. Highlighting

The adult determines what is important in the activity. The adult can emphasise a certain aspect of the interaction, e.g. doing something together. The adult needs to consider how to cut down on distractions, how close should the connection be to the student and what they choose to ignore.

#### 6. Adult's Communication Style

The adult maintains a non directive approach. The adult emphasises the importance of non-verbal communication by using facial expressions, body language, gesture and intonation to appear interesting to the student. He or she reduces the amount of language by using single words or short phrases or not using any language within the pattern. The adult slows the pace of the interaction and waits, allowing the child time to respond. Teacher always seeks to get to eye level and smiles often.

These strategies offer the child a way into playing interactive games that can lead to positive memories of interacting with adults. The children become confident participants and develop a desire to be with those adults in trusting relationships.

Currently the **Way to Play** programme is being delivered by Autism NZ in several locations throughout the country. Way to play is funded by the Ministry of Social Development and attendance for parents of children on the Autism Spectrum is free. Should you require more details regarding the **Way to Play** programme contact [pat.gluck@autismnz.org.nz](mailto:pat.gluck@autismnz.org.nz).



Neil Stuart is a teacher who has worked exclusively with children on the Autism Spectrum since 1994. Since moving to New Zealand in 2001 he has worked for Autism New Zealand delivering the EarlyBird Programme, a parent education programme specifically for parents who have a child under the age of 5. He has delivered adult education to those involved with a child with Autism, working directly with families and teachers. Neil regularly presents papers at Autism conferences and has co written several intervention programmes, most recently the framework for Autism in New Zealand and Way to Play.