

SNOOP



OSCAR Network
Christchurch

SUPPORTING THE NETWORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES
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**UNDER PRESSURE:
STRESS IN CHILDREN
COMMON REACTIONS
TO DISASTER
FRIENDS & FAMILY ARE
THE BEST MEDICINE
UNDERSTANDING
DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN
THOSE FOUR-LETTER
WORDS**



ENHANCING CHILDREN'S PLAY : WHAKAREWA / TE TAAKAROA TAMARIKI



NEW YEAR

*A Chance to begin anew. A culmination of the past.
A shared anticipation of the future.*

All around the world, people are brought together to celebrate by the concept of a New Year. Although different cultures may follow unique calendars, each New Year's celebration shares the common hope for a fresh start and a shining future.

SOME NEW YEARS CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

An important and basic similarity between New Years festivals is that they all celebrate the victory of order over disorder and a time for people to set things in order for the coming year. New Year is also believed to be the easiest time for people to rid themselves of any negative forces. These general beliefs underlie most customs. *Food, Fire and Water* also play important role in many societies.

FIRST FOOTING AND FIRST SIGHTING

In some cultures the 1st person to visit the home at New Year is believed to influence the months ahead, particularly the gift that they may bring or if they come empty handed. The first thing a person sees on New Years day is also important. In some southern Indian states this is taken so seriously that when the children wake up in the morning

they are not allowed to open their eyes. Instead their parents lead them through the house with their eyes closed until they reach the family altar on which a large number of lucky objects are laid out.

TELLING THE FUTURE

Fire: In parts of England - the ashes from the previous nights fire is used, to be 'read' on New Years morning. In Scotland a brightly burning fire on New Years morning meant prosperity in the coming year, while a dull fire indicated trouble ahead.

Molten Lead: dropped in cold water in Germany will determine the future based on whatever shape it turned out.

Dreams: New Years dreams are often considered highly significant. Girls all over the world have customs to assist them to view future husbands in their dreams.

Weather: The New Years weather is often considered to be indicative of not only the weather for the New Year ahead, but also future events in general. E.g some shepherds in England believe that a red sky on New Years morning meant strife among the countries leaders and many robberies.

FOOD

In many parts of the world the quantity and kind of food served in a household at

New Year is believed to be an indication of how family's fortunes will fare in the coming year. The Tamil people in India eat a type of chutney which contains a mixture of bitter, sweet, sour and salt tastes. This reminds people that the year ahead will include a variety of experiences all of which must be accepted as part of life. The people of Spain and Portugal pick and eat 12 grapes from a bunch just as the clock strikes 12 on New Years eve- the ensures 12 happy months in the coming year.

FIRES

It was once very common throughout Europe to drive away evil spirits by lighting large bonfires - in many places effigies or scapegoats representing the evils and misfortunes of the past year were burnt on New Years Eve. (now don't get to any ideas there guys!). Why don't you celebrate the New Year in your programme by having a Party (see activities insert for some great party game ideas!) Research with the children the many beliefs and traditions around this time. Why not start your own special traditions as a programme it will certainly help to get you all off to a good start for the New Year.

Adapted from Network News Newspaper of Network of Community Activities Australia.

THE OSCAR NETWORK IN CHRISTCHURCH INC.

We are a organisation dedicated to providing information to O.S.C.A.R. (Out of School Care And Recreation) programmes.

Our Aim is to support, promote and network safe quality, accessible OSCAR services which are professional and centre around the needs of the child and its whanau.

The OSCAR Network provides information on training, development, mentoring, funding & finances, research, advocacy, management and staff support, resources and the general running of an Out of School programme. The OSCAR Network in Christchurch encourages OSCAR providers to operate quality services, however it is not a function of the OSCAR Network to accredit or assess OSCAR services.

The OSCAR Network in Christchurch has a well-earned reputation for working co-operatively alongside other groups and agencies. We work as a team in an environment based on mutual respect and

trust. It is the combination of skills, ideas and energy, which achieves results from the consensus decision-making process. We enjoy our work by 'thinking differently'.

THANK YOU

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OVEN HANGI

SERVES ABOUT 30 CHILDREN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 piece chicken per person
- 1 chop or sausage per person
- Parsley
- 1 bunch Celery stalks, diced
- 2 kg Carrots, diced – don't peel
- A pumpkin, peeled and cut into medium sized pieces
- 10 kg potatoes, cut into medium sized pieces, don't peel (½ can be boiled on stove to make it easier to manage)
- A cabbage, shredded
- 2 cups of hot water with 2 beef stock cubes (or 2 tsp beef stock powder) dissolved
- Watercress (if available)

METHOD

- Prepare this meal in a roasting dish.
- Line with tin foil and good layer of cabbage leaves.
- Pre-heat oven to 180 C.
- Sprinkle the parsley, celery and carrots in to the dish. Lay the chicken pieces on top, followed by the lamb chops.
- Add pumpkin and potatoes, and watercress on to
- Pour over stock. No salt is needed.
- Cover with a good layer of full cabbage leaves.
- Cover the dish with a tight fitting lid or cover with a double layer of tinfoil - seal well.
- Cook in a moderate oven for 3 hours.
- Check to see if cooked after 2 1/2 hours.
- Serve with coleslaw.
- Can make gravy to go with this.

The oven tray will be heavy and hot so an adult needs to be careful handling the Hangi. The children enjoy peeling potatoes and chatting.



Flat bread can be made prior:
Flat bread/Cartwheel

INGREDIENTS:

- Flour (4 Cups)
- Baking powder (4 heaped teaspoons)
- Water or milk
- Salt (to flavour)

METHOD

Mix ingredients together, add water or milk to bind together (not too runny), roll out and knead to a nice dough. Do not over knead or the bread will not rise as well, then roll out into a cartwheel shape, place on a floured oven tray and put into a heated oven (180 deg for 25 mins approx). Do not flatten out too much or you will end up with a biscuit instead. Once the bread has risen and starts to go golden on the top it should be cooked. You should rub butter over the top to stop crust from going hard.

Good with butter and golden syrup.

Karakia mo te kai:
E te atua
whakapai enei kai
hei oranga mo o matou tinana
ko Ihu karaiti hoki
To matou kai whakaora
Amine

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SEE THE CALENDAR ON THE BACK COVER FOR TIME AND PLACE DETAILS OF OSCAR NETWORK TRAINING AND EVENTS.

UNDER PRESSURE:

STRESS

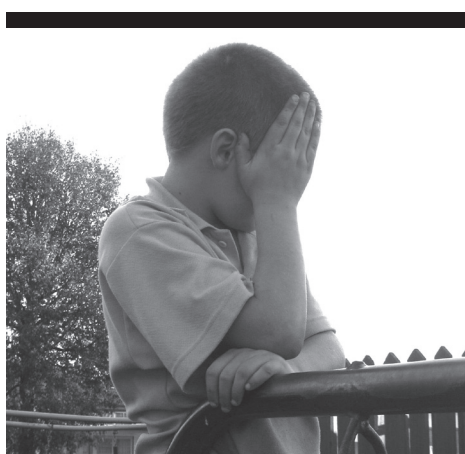
IN CHILDREN

The word “stress” may be overused but play leaders do face an often complex task in helping the children in their care to cope with life’s pressures.

Molly, aged ten, had had a difficult first hour in her after school programme. Within ten minutes of arriving she had argued with another girl over a packet of sweets which had led to someone pushing someone else causing them to career into the drinks table!

Molly’s playworker insisted she helped to clear up the mess. Molly felt blamed unfairly and argued over helping with the clearing up, but reluctantly began to swill apple juice round the floor in a dilatory manner. This enraged her playworker, who could see the mess was growing rather than reducing, and there was another flare-up. And so it continued throughout the session, until home time, when the playworkers felt Molly should really be made to “toe the line” and do her share of going home tasks. The more Molly protested the more insistent her playworker became that the tasks were done, until eventually Molly grabbed her coat, spun her on heels and turned at the door to announce, “Well thanks for sending me home stressed.”

We have already thought about how stress is a much overused word nowadays: parents are stressed, employees are stressed,



managers are stressed and recently concerns have been expressed at the increasing evidence of some children being stressed.)

There is no doubt we live in a precarious world. That said, to talk of children being stressed can be misleading because it suggests that children are like adults and that is not a good move.

Are today’s children exposed to any more uncertainty and tension than children raised during World War II, for example, many of whom were separated from their families as

evacuees? Those children, of course, were far less influenced by the media, which dictates to today’s children not only how they should look but also what they should wear, eat, read and watch on TV and at the cinema. This leads us to believe that today’s children are under pressure to succeed in every area of their life.

COMPLEX FEELINGS

The word “stress” originates from the weaving industry – a fabric is stressed when it is pulled too tight. We feel stressed when we feel we are being asked to do more than we are capable of doing, be it physically, emotionally or intellectually.

Molly certainly thought she was “stressed” by her playworker’s demands, but was what she was feeling really stress? Irritated, angry, resentful, or fed up may have been more accurate descriptions of how she felt. The risk is that we use “stress” nowadays as a blanket word to cover many experiences, and in play work this really matters because one of our tasks is to help children to understand what they are feeling, to be able to name their feelings and to express their feelings in an appropriate way.

It is a complex task to help children to recognize their feelings because so often they will express them in an inappropriate or immature manner. In school-aged children the symptoms of real stress are likely to be:

- Irritability and aggression
- Withdrawnness
- Hyperactivity
- Loss of appetite
- Generally feeling low and lacking in energy
- Thinking and/or talking about running away, truanting and/or harming themselves
- Finding it hard to talk about worries, feelings or thoughts because they feel “weird”

FLASHPOINTS

What we can be sure about Molly is that she came in to her programme with something on her mind. Stress is accumulative. When we find it difficult to cope we use up energy worrying and so make it more difficult to cope generally. Molly’s “flashpoint” was her argument over sweets when she arrived at her programme. But flashpoints often have very little to do with the child’s real stress or worry. Children are as prone to the last straw as adults!

The next evening Molly’s playworker discussed her behaviour with her. She asked what sort of day she had had before the programme. Molly had begun the day angry and resentful because her mother was refusing to let her have her ears pierced like all her friends. Molly knew her mother was adamant about this and there was no point in arguing. On arrival at school she had had an argument with a teacher over a trivial matter and so the day had gone on with Molly arguing with anyone she could. What she needed to stem the flow of arguments was an opportunity to talk about her anger and frustration.

AVOIDING STRESS

There is no doubt that some children suffer stress, and we need to think about situations children of this age may find stressful:

- Argumentative parents
- Losing touch with a parent of feeling a parent is not interested in them
- Parental illness
- Bereavement
- New baby or step-sibling in the family
- Beginning secondary school
- Inconsistency in parental expectations

Many adults are stressed by such life events, so it is not surprising children react with worry, anxiety and unhappiness. However, the major influence on how children manage such stresses is the behaviour of the adults surrounding them. Adults’ stress is contagious and directly linked to the child’s level of anxiety. Traumatized children are able to cope and recover when the adults around them give a clear message: “this is painful and difficult but it is manageable and we will help you to manage it.” Children’s stress is compounded when adults seem unable to cope and, even worse, when a child may feel responsible for looking after a parent during a traumatic life event. We will look at this last area in more depth later in the book, in the chapter “Headline News”.

However, it is easy to miss more subtle causes of children’s stress: their often frantic attempts to cope with adults’ expectations of them. Parents seem both more insecure in their parenting and also more concerned about getting it right. Many are filled with an anxiety for their child to be seen to be succeeding. So children are provided with a wide range of extra curricular activities – after school a child is rushed from one activity to another, and then to “crash out” on the computer or in front of the television. Most parents are leading equally frantic lives with full time jobs and employers who seem both more family-friendly and yet more demanding in terms of hours and commitment to the job. It is not unreasonable to suppose that “hurry up” are the most used words in many families before 8.30am!

Parents and children seem to have less time simply to be together. Children have little time to work off the stresses of the day in physical activities such as playing outside freely. Additional stress is caused by parents’ anxieties about safety when children want to wander off on their own, either on foot or cycling. Parents may feel so anxious about how to parent well that there is a sense of children being unfocused, with almost too many activities to absorb and not enough time to simply relax and do nothing.

When a child succeeds there is a sense in which it proves that parents have done a good job. And a child’s success is a parent’s reward for the demanding task of parenting. As a society we now seem to measure success more in academic achievement than in other

areas. Practical skills and apprenticeships do not seem to attract the same value, and so it is not surprising that children are under pressure to succeed in school. This pressure comes not only from their parents but also their teachers who are also more assessed and tested than any previous generation of teachers. It is almost impossible for adults not to transmit some of their stresses to the children in their care.

HOW TO COPE

We should regard stress as a dangerous word. It is a vague word which doesn’t help people to understand what they are feeling and how they should manage those feelings. So whenever anyone, child or adult, complains of stress, we need to help them to “unpack”, to think a little more broadly and deeply about what is going on for them.

HOW TO MANAGE STRESS IN CHILDREN

- Help children to identify and name their feelings
- Encourage children to talk through difficulties rather than just react to them
- Provide children with opportunities for physical exercise

Some children do lead stressful lives and find themselves in life situations which cannot be changed or altered. Such children will need help to accept that life for them is difficult but manageable. As one twelve year old said, “This is my real life...it’s what’s happening now... I can’t switch channels and watch something else...”

A Playworker’s Guide to Understanding Children’s Behaviour by Andrea Clifford-Poston.
Page 59-65

In a major crisis, children’s attitudes and behaviour are most coloured by the way the adults around them behave and manage their feelings about what is happening.

Children are acutely sensitive to adult’s emotional states at the best of times. In the worst of times, they turn to adults to make sense of their fears and worries. When it comes to natural disasters, we are often put in a position of trying to explain events that we cannot begin to comprehend ourselves. It is frightening for a child to feel that the adults on whom they rely for comfort are themselves distressed and unable to cope.

COMMON REACTIONS TO DISASTER

A disaster is frightening to everyone. Several factors play an important part in a child's reaction to the event. Children will be affected by the amount of direct exposure they have had to the disaster.

If a friend or family member has been killed or seriously injured and/or the child's school, home or neighbourhood has been destroyed or severely damaged, there is a greater chance that the child will experience difficulties. Adults can help children grieve by patiently listening and being able to tolerate feelings. Children are very aware of adults' worries most of the time but they are particularly sensitive during the period of a disaster. Acknowledging your concerns to the children is important, as is your ability to cope with stress. Another factor that affects a child's response is his/her developmental age. Talking about the disaster together using words children can understand is important, as is being sensitive to their different responses.

School-age children whose homes have been damaged may express the fear that life isn't safe or fair, whereas adolescents may minimize their concerns but fight more with parents and spend more time with their friends. It is important to listen to children's individual concerns and to be alert to signs of difficulty.

Children are the most vulnerable population. Times of disaster and trauma increase their vulnerability. Recognizing children's symptoms of stress is not easy.

SOME STRESS REACTIONS MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Sleep disorders
- Persistent thoughts of trauma
- Belief that another bad event will occur
- Conduct disturbances
- Hyper-alertness
- Regression, thumb sucking
- Dependent behaviours
- Time distortion
- Obsession about the event
- Feeling vulnerable
- Excessive attachment behaviours

Primary school children in the developmental stage of accomplishing and feeling competent may not progress well in school. Research indicates that the stage of identity development (usually in adolescent and teen years) can be hampered if fear is pronounced.

CHILD'S PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY REACTIONS

Sometimes, anxiety in children can be attributed to anxiety in parents. Children who realize that their parents are powerless and are fearful.

EXPECTED REACTIONS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS TO DISASTERS

- Refusal to return to school or child care. This may emerge up to several months after the disaster.
- Fears related to the disaster.
- Sleep disturbances persisting several months after the disaster, manifested by nightmares and bed wetting.
- Misconduct and disobedience related to the disaster reflecting anxieties and losses that the child may not be talking about may appear weeks or months later.
- Physical complaints (stomach aches, fevers, headaches, dizziness) for which no immediate physical cause is apparent.
- Withdrawal from family and friends, listlessness, decreased activity, pre-occupations with the events of the disaster. Many children may be confused or upset by their normal grief reaction. Children have reported that they do not feel enough support from adults during a disaster.
- Loss of concentration, irritability.
- Increased susceptibility to infection and physical problems related to the disaster.

The most common psychological disturbances found among children who have lived through a disaster include:

anxiety disorders, sleep-disturbances, phobias, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Children proceed through a variety of stages following a trauma. The following stages have been identified as stages one might expect following a disaster.

- **Terror** - Exhibits for children through crying, vomiting or bodily discharge, becoming mute, loss of temper, or running away.
- **Rage, anger** - Adrenaline release, tense muscles, heart rate increases.
- **Denial** - Adults may exhibit denial differently than children. Some behaviours include feeling numb, blocking off pain and emotion, dreaming, feeling removed from experiences, or no feelings at all. Children may withdraw into uncustodial behaviour patterns. One study reported avoidance and resistance to participating in art therapy by not drawing anything related to the actual disaster (*Newman, 1976*). Behaviours may appear non-responsive and be overlooked.
- **Unresolved grief** - Unresolved grief could move into deep depression or major character changes to adjust to unresolved demands of grief and trauma. A child may stay sad or angry, be passive or resistant.
- **Shame and guilt** - Children do not believe in randomness and may even feel at fault after a disaster. Shame is one's public exposure of vulnerabilities. Guilt is private. There is a need to resolve these feelings, regain a sense of control, gain a new sense of independence and feel capable.

The effects of trauma in childhood can be found both immediately and after a long period of time. Trauma changes those involved

Friends (and Family) Are the Best Medicine

We learn to handle stress from our parents during infancy.

*By Maia Szalavitz
July 28, 2010*



For years we've been told that the best ways to reduce stress are things like exercise, meditation and relaxation. But this advice misses what may be the most important source of stress reduction: relationships. And today, yet another study was released that shows just how critical human contact is for health. Reviewing the results of 48 earlier studies including over 300,000 people, it found that those with strong relationships have a 50% lower risk of mortality than those who are isolated and without social support.

As the authors point out, that's as large a benefit as people get from not smoking.

Why should this be? As we describe in much greater detail in *Born for Love*, we learn to handle stress from our parents as they nurture and interact with us through physical affection as infants. Thus, our stress systems are first wired such that "Mummy"

or "Daddy" reliably relieve stress. Anyone who has seen a baby light up when a parent returns from a night out has seen part of this process in action.

Even an 80-year-old will experience lowered blood pressure if his 100-year-old mother is there to hold his hand. Now, obviously, there are exceptions in terms of abuse-but even the most severely abused children still take some comfort from their abusive parents. That's one reason abuse can be so damaging: it can actually wire in a response in which abuse is associated with stress relief.

Consequently, because the link between human contact and stress relief is so primal, it's not surprising that supportive friends and family have so many health benefits. As we grow up, we learn to connect other social contact with stress relief, generalizing from our early experience and learning to

take pleasure in being in touch. But when children are exposed to extreme stress early in life (especially without these modulating forces) there is a dramatically increased risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, stroke-and every mental illness that has been studied, including addictions.

These studies emphasize that these effects last a lifetime-and that in many cases, friends truly are the best medicine. If you want to be happy and healthy, learning to empathize and connect is critical.

References

Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review.

Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Timothy B. Smith, J. Bradley Layton.

Born for Love is available to borrow from the OSCAR Network Library

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Attunement ~ Reading the Rhythms of the Child

BY BRUCE D. PERRY MD, PHD

*‘My teacher can hear me thinking. She knows when I want to paint and then she lets me.’
~ A 5-year-old girl explaining why she loves to go to school.*

Each day, in every classroom, there are thousands of human-to-human interactions. With words loud smiles and open arms, teachers and children seek to communicate. And in doing so, a teacher can connect with children in ways that allow sharing, soothing, and learning. Yet there can be no communication if the instructive words are not heard, the tender touch is unfelt, and the admiring gaze is unseen.

How often our best words dissolve unheard by those we wish to touch. Fear, anger, frustration, confusion, preoccupation, or boredom has made them “deaf.” This was the wrong time or the wrong way to use those words. There has been a mismatch. What you wish to say, in that moment, is not very important to the listener. And you have not perceived what they are saying to you - “Not now. Don’t use words. I am tired, scared, hungry, bored, angry.”

This is why the core of good teaching is attunement; that is being aware of, and responsive to, another. How does this child feel? Is she interested, engaged, capable of listening to what I want to say? What is the best way to communicate an idea, fact, concept, or principle to her in this moment? What will engage, encourage, and excite her about this subject? What will be heard, perceived, felt, and learned? In short, what the teacher will communicate depends upon how receptive the child is. And how well a teacher reads a child’s receptivity depends upon an understanding of how humans communicate without words.

The core of good teaching is attunement - being aware of and responsive to one another.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Attunement depends upon our amazing capacity for nonverbal communication. In fact, the vast majority of our communication with others is nonverbal and a huge percentage of what our brains perceive in the communication we receive from others is focused (even without our being aware) on nonverbal signals, such as eye movements, facial gestures, tone of voice, the move of a hand, or a tip of the head. Even as one area of the brain is processing and attending to the words in an interaction, other areas are continually focusing on, and responding to, the nonverbal actions that accompany the words. Through this process, a child can literally sense your interest, your approval, and your enthusiasm.

Children, in some ways, have the easier task. The teacher has the challenge of being attuned to 20 or more different children. Each of the children will have different strengths, vulnerabilities, sensory preferences, and styles of exploration (for instance, timid vs. bold). And each child’s “receptivity” shifts throughout the day. In one moment a child may be alert, attentive, and capable of tolerating the frustrations of a new challenge. Hours later, this same child is tired, hungry, fussy, and will be easily frustrated by any new challenge. This is the time to give the child something simple and familiar, something previously mastered

such as building a tower with blocks.

A child’s capacity to learn in any given moment is determined by internal rhythms. Different Children - Different Capacities

A child’s capacity to learn in any given moment is determined by internal rhythms. Our bodies and our minds move through predictable rhythms driven by powerful physiological processes. Sleep and wake. Hunger and satiety. The human brain’s capacity to focus, listen, learn, and communicate is shaped by the symphony of dozens of patterns of rhythmic biological activity, creating, in any given moment, a person’s internal state. In some of these states, we are attentive and receptive (for instance, calm and satisfied), while in other states, we are incapable of learning (when asleep, exhausted, and so on). In order to be attuned to someone, we must interpret his nonverbal (and verbal) cues, which are reflections of these powerful physiological rhythms.

Furthermore, in addition to the individual rhythms of the child, each day, week, and school year have superimposing rhythms that influence a child’s “receptivity.” The first few weeks of school, for example, are so novel that most children require time to adjust and become familiar with the novelty before they are able to learn efficiently. In the last month of school, children sense the change in pace and anticipate the upcoming transition, again being less capable of learning efficiently. There is also a rhythm



to the week - Mondays are different from Fridays - and a rhythm to the day. A teacher is more likely to find a receptive class in the middle of the morning than in the 30 minutes before school is over. Throughout our lives, attunement helps us build and maintain our relationships. You can help children become better attuned to you and to their peers. The capacity to be sensitive to someone else can be taught.

By taking the child's innate preference to read nonverbal cues and by developing her capacity to watch, listen, and learn, you will be fostering socioemotional literacy and helping our children become fluent in the most important of all human languages - our socioemotional language.

This article originally appeared in the October, 2000 issue of Early Childhood Today.

ATTUNEMENT: THE FOURTH CORE STRENGTH

Being aware of others

WHAT IT IS: Recognizing the needs, interests, strengths, and values of others. Infants begin life self-absorbed, and slowly develop awareness--the ability to see beyond themselves, and to sense and categorize the other people in their world. At first this process is simplistic: "I am a boy and she is a girl. Her skin is brown and mine is white." As a child grows, his awareness of differences and similarities becomes more complex.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: The ability to be attuned, to read and respond to the needs of others, is an essential element of human communication. An aware child learns about the needs and complexities of others by watching, listening, and forming relationships with a variety of children. She becomes part of a group (which the core strength of affiliation allows her to do), and sees ways in which we are all alike and different. With experience, a child can learn to reject "labels" used to categorize people such as skin colour or language. The aware child will also be much less likely to exclude others from a group, less likely to tease, and less likely to act in a violent way.

SIGNS OF STRUGGLE: A child who lacks the ability to be aware of others' needs and values is at risk for developing prejudicial attitudes. Having formed ideas about others without knowing them, she may continue to make categorical, often destructive and stereotypical judgments: "She speaks

English with an accent, so she must be stupid," or "He's fat, so he must be lazy." This immature kind of thinking feeds the hateful beliefs underlying many forms of verbal and physical violence.

RED FLAGS

When children struggle with the core strength of awareness, they may:

- make insensitive comments about other children's weaknesses without recognizing the impact
- will tend to see things as absolute
- form (often negative) ideas about others based on stereotypes
- feel socially out of tune with others, so judgments of others may be harsh
- be more likely to put down others to lift themselves up; ie, bullying or teasing

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- When you can, point out how a person or event in the news demonstrates complexity and goes against stereotypes
- Talk about "stereotypes." What are they? Are they fair? Why or why not?
- Each week, notice and reward one "random act of kindness" you see.
- Make sure that programme materials are multicultural and reflect the world.

Adapted from Six Core Strengths for Healthy Child Development.

Overview: Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.

Full version available on Oscar Networks website: www.oscarnetwork.org.nz

HIDDEN MESSAGES - BEHIND THE FACADE: UNDERSTANDING **DISRUPT** CHILDREN

Children have limited ways of to express themselves and also often don't understand why they feel the way they do-so playworkers need to try discover what a child's behaviour is really telling them "He's rude, a nuisance and he just spoils things for the others..."

Ten year old Ross was fast becoming the bane of his play leader's life. "He's our only problem," continued another staff member, "they'll all be getting on fine and then Ross comes in and disrupts it all. The programme is so different when he's not around." "Yes," add another, "but he's fine one on one. It's when he gets into a group he messes up."

Feelings were running high in this staff support group; it was obvious some of the staff wanted to exclude Ross, not so much to punish him but because they simply didn't know how to cope with him. They all shared the feeling that they had used the gamut of their skills with him. Ross's key worker tried to defend him: "He's not a bad kid," she said rather lamely, "he's just disruptive. "Anyone working with children would sympathise with these practitioners, but are disruptive children just disruptive?"

DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN MAKE ADULTS FEEL HELPLESS

Disruptive children are difficult to manage- by very virtue of their problem. They set out to disrupt-and that includes disrupting your management skills! So in a way the most difficult aspect of managing disruptive children is how they can make adults feel:

- Powerless-"I can't control him"

- Anxious-"I'm supposed to be able to control him"
- Angry-firstly with the child for behaving so disruptively. Secondly, with ourselves for feeling powerless and anxious.

A DISRUPTIVE CHILD IS AN ANXIOUS CHILD

Children use behaviour to communicate with grown-ups and they often choose behaviour that makes the adult feel how they feel. Ross had a lot to be anxious about: he had little relationship with his father, who worked overseas for long periods at a time; his mother found it hard to cope alone with Ross, his two younger brothers, and a full-time job. Ross was always last to leave the programme, often saying his mother wouldn't be home "till later".

We could think of Ross as an "uncontained" child, a child full of overflowing worry. Structure is very important in helping children to feel contained: a regular routine with clear boundaries helps a child to be able to predict their day, they know roughly what is going to happen next. This mental and physical structure helps them to feel contained emotionally. Even if they are unhappy, the world may feel relatively safe because in a sense they know what is going to happen next. Ross never quite knew

when his parents would be around, and his stressed mother ran a fairly laissez-faire home with irregular discipline and routine.

One way of understanding Ross' disruptive behaviour was to think of him as looking for boundaries and containment. Being disruptive is a form of curiosity-it can be a way of finding out about authority. Here Ross was asking "Where are the authority figures here, what will they allow and not allow?" This is a very necessary developmental stage and, indeed, we can argue a little rebellion is no bad thing, maybe sometimes we should be more worried about children who don't test rules. However, disruptive children often don't understand a rule is a rule until they have broken it. They may not previously have had the experience of being told, in a firm but kind way: "this far and no further". And so in a sense, one of the things a disruptive child wants is to be prevented from being disruptive.

DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN HAVE OFTEN BEEN DISRUPTED

Ross's early life had been punctuated by frequent house moves and changes of school on account of his father's job. Additionally, his father's work was erratic, meaning he could be called overseas suddenly at short

notice. Ross never really knew when he would and wouldn't see his father. As far as he was concerned, life could change dramatically at a moment's notice, and we can wonder what this means to a child.

Children often try to understand puzzling or worrying experiences by re-enacting them. For example, many of us have

of the child, other people in the group may feel free to be more negative about the child. Equally, sometimes when everybody is feeling very optimistic, one staff member may be left expressing all the negative points. In such a case, that staff member is carrying the negative aspects for the group, i.e., thinking about the aspects of the child the other members of the group find difficult to think about and experience.

DISRUPTIVE

witnessed the scene where a toddler spills a drink on the carpet or the furniture. Initially shocked, the toddler then becomes fascinated by the adults' consternation, often watching intensely as the adults rush around trying to repair the damage. Then, seated again securely and encouraged not to spill another drink, the toddler may deliberately pour the second drink onto the carpet, usually causing outrage at their "naughtiness".

Such a child isn't being naughty-they are more likely to be acting out the scene to try and understand it. What happened? Why were the adults so excited? Let's do it again and see if I can find out. So it is with the disruptive child-Ross was trying to make sense of disruptions in his life by reliving disruption over and over again.

DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN ARE RARELY "THE ONLY PROBLEM"

Disruptive children often work very hard on behalf of other children in the group. Their hard work often goes unrewarded! In families one child can carry the feelings for everyone else, and the same process can happen in any group of children anywhere. (As indeed it does in staff groups!) Most of us have had the experience of being in a group where one person may be very negative about a child, and another person may be very positive about that child, feeling that however difficult the child is they have their good points.

What happens dynamically is that because one person is holding the positive aspects

Disruptive children sometimes are carrying disruption for the group. Ross was so disruptive the other children didn't need to be disruptive. If they felt discontent, angry, bored they didn't need to act on it because, unconsciously, they knew that Ross could be relied upon to express those feelings for them. It is often true that when a disruptive child is absent from a group for more than a very short period, a keenly observant play leader will notice that another child in the group becomes more "difficult".

WHEN TO WORRY

Disruptive and disturbing behaviour helps us to understand which children we should be worried about. The disruptive child is hoping that there is an adult around him who will eventually hear and take note of his anxieties. Much more worrying is the quiet and withdrawn child who may have given up on such a hope - these children can be overlooked because they are not disruptive to group or demanding the adults' attention.

HELPING THE DISRUPTIVE CHILD

Above all, disruptive child needs to feel close to an adult, to feel attached to someone. In Ross' case, one play leader was assigned to take a special interest in him. She made sure that she always greeted him on arrival and that she checked on him at frequent intervals during programme. His play leader was absolutely right when she said, "He's alright one-on-one". That may be exactly what Ross thought-in the early years he may have missed out on enough one-on-

one attention from an adult and, so tended to feel a bit lost in a group.

Disruptive children need to feel secure. As soon as Ross arrived at the after school programme, his play leader made sure she explained to him very clearly exactly what was going to happen at programme that evening. She made sure he knew exactly what the rules of any activity were, and exactly what would be expected of him, what he should do when he had finished an activity, and tried to "pick him up" at the end of each activity so that his anxiety levels didn't get an opportunity to rise too high. The staff group as a whole tried to make an effort to keep checking on Ross every ten or fifteen minutes in a positive manner, by asking, "Everything okay, Ross?" or "Having a good time, Ross?"

Disruptive children need to feel contained by adults; they need to be able to rely on the routine of programme as being relatively predictable and consistent. Play leaders are subject, of course, to the moods and stresses of everyday life, but children need them to be as consistent as they can be. However irritated they felt, Ross' play leaders tried to deal with his disruption in a calm, firm but kind manner. By doing so, they were giving Ross the message that however chaotic and disruptive he felt, he could not overwhelm the adults and deskill them; they could look after him and help him to manage his anxiety and chaos.

When we show children that we understand how they feel, and that we can help them to find a better way of communicating how they feel, then they learn not only how to get their needs met, but also how to respect other people. If you ask yourself "How does this child make me feel?" it will give you some understanding of how the child might be feeling, regardless of how he is behaving. Once you recognise how he feels, it will help you to respond to his behaviour. However, the question remains, who is going to contain adults looking after disruptive children?

A Playworker's Guide to Understanding Children's Behaviour by Andrea Clifford-Poston.

Page 119-125

This fantastic book is available to borrow from the OSCAR Network Library.

NB In England OSCAR workers are called Playworkers (which we of course love!)

NEWS >>>>>

EMERGENCIES: "IT'S EASY" GUIDE

A guide outlining easy step-by-step instructions for how to prepare for an emergency, published by the Wellington Region Emergency Management Group, has won the International Association of Emergency Managers 2010 Global Public Awareness Award. The "It's Easy" booklet was published in June 2010.

*Copies of the booklet are online at:
www.getprepared.co.nz.*

Some of the information is specific to the Wellington Region but most is generic and very applicable anywhere.

MANAGING CHILDHOOD ASTHMA: WEBSITE

PHARMAC and the Asthma Foundation have launched a new website designed to help parents, carers and health professionals better manage children's asthma. The Space to Breathe website includes information about what asthma is, identifying and understanding individual triggers and signs of asthma, what to do during emergencies, understanding asthma medications and how to use them effectively, and where to get support.

*<http://www.spacetobreathe.co.nz>
*Rural Bulletin, October 2010**

STRONGER SOCIETY: DEPROGRAMMING BULLIES

We encounter bullies in all walks of life, and sometimes it may seem that society is not good at dealing with them: can positive qualities like empathy and kindness be taught?

In the last 10 years, the field of social neuroscience has taught us a great deal about how our brains are wired to care, compete, and cooperate. Programs such as Roots of Empathy work by exposing preschoolers to a mother and baby interacting normally. When the baby cries, the children are taught that it is a baby with a problem, not

a "bad baby", and they are asked to provide possible solutions. This teaches the children to try to put themselves in the baby's place, a key form of empathy that builds the neural networks for their future.

Since the ROE programs began in 1996, nine independent studies have reported a decrease in aggressive behaviour and an increase in positive socialisation in schools that have run the programme.

*More on the Roots of Empathy programme is at:
<http://www.rootsofempathy.org/>*

THE VALUE OF TOYS

An average 10-year-old has toys costing £7,000 but plays with just £330 worth. The typical child owns 238 toys but only pulls out 12 favourites each day. A study of 3,000 parents by toy firm Dream Town found that they waste thousands of pounds on toys their children do not use.

BACK TO THE OUTDOORS

Traditional outdoor play, such as climbing trees, playing in the park and swimming in a lake are things of the past, according to a survey of 3,000 parents. Fewer than one in 10 children have played games such as 'kiss chase' and 'stuck in the mud'. 92% of children under 16 have never swum in a lake or slept outdoors. The survey was carried out to mark the launch of Dora the Explorer's Beyond the Backpack Foundation, a venture aimed at encouraging families to take part in 'adventurous' outdoor pursuits.

London Play Nov 10 Newsletter

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE OPEN POLYTECHNIC OSCAR CERTIFICATE COURSES (4290 AND 4291)

The Open Polytechnic is changing the completion time for both of the OSCAR Certificate courses (4290 and 4291) from 52 weeks to 32 weeks. Enrolments open on 1 December 2010 for 2011 OSCAR Certificate courses. The Open Polytechnic

will not accept any new enrolments between now and 1 December 2010.

Any enrolments that we have already received that are waiting on Police Vetting etc. will be accepted by The Open Polytechnic once the Police Vetting comes through.

CODE OF FUNDING PRACTICE

A new Code of Funding Practice is now available, to help government funders and non-profit organisations work together when using public funds to benefit communities. The Code sets out seven core code areas, and accompanying criteria, success indicators and examples of good practice. It also has review tools for each core code, to help agencies assess their current practice against the new Code and identify appropriate changes.

HOW KIWIS GIVE

The Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) has published new quarterly data on giving. The quarterly giving report draws primarily on data from Nielsen Media Research's Panorama survey, and is a follow-up to the annual How do New Zealanders give? series.

The key findings for the December quarter 2009 and March quarter 2010 are:

- the percentage of people 10 years and over who volunteered increased from 28.3 percent to 30.3 percent. There was a corresponding increase in median monthly hours volunteered - from 8 to 10 hours per volunteer. This increase appears to be driven by male sports volunteering over the summer period.
- the percentage of people who donated money remained stable, at around 40 percent in both quarters. In contrast, the median monthly dollars donated decreased from \$40 to \$35. This appears to be a seasonal change, influenced by Christmas fundraising activities in the December quarter.
- the percentage of people donating goods remained stable, at around 16 percent.

THOSE FOUR- LETTER WORDS



When people who care for school-age children get together, they almost always discuss the use of “bad” language. The first time you hear a 6-year-old or a 10-year-old let loose with a whole string of unacceptable words, it can be quite a shock!

Inappropriate language is not limited to school-age children. However, it certainly is more common with this group. Here are some things you can do to keep those “four-letter words” under control!

HAVE CLEAR RULES

Avoid problems from the start by setting clear rules at the beginning of the year. If kids understand that certain language is not allowed, they will be less likely to use it. When setting rules, it is important to discuss why the rule is needed. Involving kids in actually developing the rules will make it more likely they will follow them.

UNDERSTAND WHY CHILDREN USE UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE AND TEACH THEM ALTERNATIVES

When a child begins to use unacceptable words, it is important to know why. Children say these words for many different reasons. Sometimes, the words are used out of ignorance. At other times, children use them to meet a need. If you understand why they are doing it, you will be more likely to deal with the problem in an effective way. Here are some reasons why young people use inappropriate language and some suggestions for dealing with each situation.

TO BE ACCEPTED BY FRIENDS.

A child with poor social skills may not know how to enter a group, how to work with others, or how to be a friend. The only way that child may be able to get attention from the other kids is to use inappropriate language. Teaching social skills to the child will help eliminate the real cause of the

problem. The unacceptable language will probably stop also.

TO SHOCK ADULTS.

Sometimes, young people learn that using certain words gives them power over adults. It is hard for adults to hear kids using certain words because we understand the meaning of those words. However, young people often do not know what the words mean. They say the words simply because others react to them. Stay calm and don't overreact when children use these words. In this way, you take away some of the shock value of the words.

BECAUSE THEY HEAR IT AT HOME.

Children come from many different family situations. In some homes, using certain language is acceptable. There is little you can do about this. Blaming the parents will not change the child's behaviour in the child care setting. A more effective tactic is to explain to the child that the words are not acceptable in your programme.

TO EXPRESS THEIR EMOTIONS.

Some words are often heard during arguments or when a child is frustrated. In this case, it is important to teach the child acceptable ways to express her emotions. You could say, “Name-calling isn't allowed here because it hurts people's feelings. If you are mad at Jerry, tell him that you are mad at him. “ Or you might say, “I understand you are frustrated with your project, but the word you said bothers people. If you are upset, you may say ‘Rats!’ (or whatever word you feel is acceptable) instead.” Also,

make sure the activity is right for the child. Perhaps an easier project is in order.

TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY MEAN.

Many times, children use words without understanding what they mean. Sometimes, children use these words because they want to know what they mean. This often happens with sexual terms. A brief explanation of what the word means will often take care of the problem. Therefore, you may want to let parents know that the child is using these words. You might say, “Mrs. Arnold, Jim has started calling other children ‘X.’ This is very common at this age. Jim probably doesn't know what the word means. He may even be saying it because he wants to know what it means.”

ESTABLISH REASONABLE CONSEQUENCES

These examples show the importance of teaching children alternatives to using inappropriate language. However, this teaching takes time. Some children will need the added incentive of consequences to help them stop using the forbidden words. It is important to choose consequences carefully and to use them sparingly. The consequence should be reasonable and carefully tied to the behaviour. For example, if a child uses unacceptable language around other children, the child may need to play alone for 15 minutes. If a child continually swears while completing a project, he may need to put the project away until the next day. Children who repeatedly use words to shock their caregivers may need to tell their parents what words they said.

Four-letter words are common during the school years. If you understand why they are used and use appropriate guidance and discipline techniques, you can help to eliminate their use in the child care setting.



RECIPE FOR HUT BUILDING

20 PALLETS

2 KG NAILS

5 HAMMERS

COVERSHEETS

WASTE MDF

TARPS ETC

**20 KIDS
+ FREE TIME
= AWESOME
ACTIVITY**

The concept was to see how the children at our holiday programme would handle being left to their own devices, back to basics where they could make their own fun and express themselves as they choose.

There was to be limited assistance from staff and only minimal supervision to ensure the activity didn't get out of hand. Our area was the school's edible garden, a disused pool, with the pool area set up as grass with raised gardens around the edges.

Our only instruction at the beginning was that everyone was entitled to participate in constructing a hut. We offered physical assistance building the huts, at the direction of the children and made sure that the creation was as safe as it could be! Once the construction process was completed we tried standing back and seeing what would evolve.

While the girls' huts and play tended towards a more domestic theme, the boy's went to war (no real surprise really!) Unfortunately this soon required intervention due to the nature of the "game" and the introduction of weapons. We regulated this part of the game to a separate designated time so not to impose on others.

Throughout the duration of the programme, the huts remained a strong focus with all the kids involved, and interestingly when new children came into the programme they were quickly inducted into the activity with an excited build-up of detailed descriptions of the constructions, the themes and what



the plan for the day was when they got their free time.

The children were very excited to show off "their" areas and took every opportunity to introduce parents, caregivers, siblings, teachers and friends to what they'd been up to during the programme. While staff were looked to for guidance, we would usually put the issue back on the groups to sort out as required. There were very few issues and behaviour was generally acceptable.



Despite the rough nature of the materials, no injuries were incurred and everyone enjoyed their free time either role playing or just chilling out. Even at the conclusion of our time, when huts needed to be dismantled and the area returned to its original designation, all those who were part of a group assisted each other in pulling apart and cleaning up their materials – this was done in individual groups to reduce accidents.



Overall we concluded what a great activity this was, to allow natural play, particularly the way new children to the programme and children with behavioural issues were accommodated by the other children and generally just the way they "owned the activity". It kind of took on a "Lord of the Flies" mantra for a short time, followed by a "Hobbiton" feel towards the end. Very cool just to sit back and watch.

Kevin Rielly, WOOSH

PEGASUS HIRE CENTRE

Opening Saturday 20th November

(at the beach adjacent to the Flat White Café)

With a beautifully landscaped feature lake for swimming and kayaking, bike and walking trails, as well as wetlands and a surf beach, Pegasus Town with its park-like surroundings is a mecca for all recreation and outdoor pursuits.

A combination of Optimist sailing yachts, Piccolos, single and double kayaks and mountain bikes AVAILABLE FOR HIRE.

OPENING HOURS **GROUP BOOKINGS WELCOME OUTSIDE OF THESE HOURS**

10.00am - 6.00pm (weather dependent)

Weekends only from 20 November to 19 December

Seven days from 20 December to 6 February

Weekends only from 7 February to 1 May

The Hire Centre is open all public holidays with the exception of Christmas Day. Sailing lessons are available by arrangement.

This is a great way to spend time with your work colleagues for end of year functions or the end of school term. Enjoy kayak challenges or simply relax on the lake, and then adjourn to the Flat White Café and enjoy their new summer menu.

Look out for our team kayak races coming soon...

These will be advertised during January, February and March with great prizes to be won!



For bookings and further information
Phone: 03 920 3305, Mobile: 0274 336 778
Email: hirecentre@pegasustown.com
www.pegasustown.com

Pegasus
Live where you play

OSCAR NETWORK TRAINING AND EVENT CALENDAR TERM 1 2011

EVENT	BRIEF RUN-DOWN	DATE	TIME & PLACE	COST (GST INCLUSIVE)
Cluster North West	Suitable for all Staff and Management	Tuesday 15th February	10am - 12 noon Fendalton Service Centre Cnr Jeffreys & Clyde Roads	Free
Cluster South East	Suitable for all Staff and Management	Wednesday 16th February	10am - 12 noon Beckenham Service Centre 66 Colombo Street	Free
Cluster & Training Selwyn	Suitable for all Staff and Management • Child Protection	Thursday 17th February	10am - 1pm Rolleston School 11 Tennyson Street Rolleston	Cluster: Free Training: \$30 members \$75 non-members
Shaking Christchurch	Suitable for all Staff and Management	Wednesday 23rd February	10am - 12.30pm Knox Centre, 28 Bealey Ave	\$30 members \$75 non-members
Open Polytechnic Certificate in OSCAR	This is suitable for all staff – you do not have to be enrolled for the certificate	Tuesday 1st March	9.30am - 10.30am Introduction OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street Addington	Free
Training Day	Suitable for all Staff and Management – Brochure out nearer the time.	Saturday 5th March	9.15am - 3.15pm Knox Centre, 28 Bealey Ave	\$50 members \$150 non-members
Cluster & Training Rangiora	Suitable for all Staff and Management • Child Protection	Thursday 10th March	10am - 1pm Rangiora War Memorial Hall Albert Street Rangiora	Cluster: Free Training: \$30 members \$75 non-members
Core Training	• Child Protection • Child Behaviour 1	Tuesday 15th March	10am - 12.30pm Knox Centre, 28 Bealey Ave	\$30 members \$75 non-members
Evening Training	• Child Behaviour 2 • Management Forum	Thursday 24th March	7pm - 9.30pm Knox Centre, 28 Bealey Ave	\$30 members \$75 non-members Forum: Free