

SNOOP



OSCAR Network
Christchurch

SUPPORTING THE NETWORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES
ISSUE 71 TERM 4 2011

EATING AS FAMILY
AIDS TEEN HEALTH
WELCOMING TAMARIKI
AND WHANAU TO YOUR
PROGRAMME
TEN THINGS YOUR
STUDENT WITH AUTISM
WISHES YOU KNEW
YOU REALLY GOT ME!
THE CHILD WHO GETS
UNDER YOUR SKIN
PLAY AND
PARTICIPATION



ENHANCING CHILDREN'S PLAY : WHAKAREWA / TE TAAKARO TAMARIKI



Ngā mihi o te wā me te Tau Hou
 A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
 Ngā mihi o te wā me te aroha nui, nā (ingoa)
 Happy Christmas lots of love, from (name)
 Ngā mihi o te wā me te Tau Hou
 A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
 Ngā mihi o te Kirihimete
 Christmas Greetings
 Ngā mihi mō te Kirihimete
 Wishing you a very Happy Christmas
 Ngā mihi o te Tau Hou
 Happy New Year
 Ngā mihi o te Tau Hou ki a koutou katoa
 Wishing you all a very Happy New Year
 Ngā mihi o te Tau Hou ki a kōrua
 Wishing you both a very Happy New Year



THE OSCAR NETWORK IN CHRISTCHURCH INC.

We are an 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 their whanau.

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'.

Sharon Williams
Liz Hawes
Pam Hughes

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

THANK YOU

We would like to thank our funders. The OSCAR Network could not operate without the generous support of the following funding agencies:

- Ministry of Social Development
- Christchurch City Council
- Canterbury Community Trust
- Lottery Grants Board
- Community Organisation Grants
- Pub Charity
- Mainland Foundation
- Zeald.com

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A LIST OF '10 MOST BIZARRE HEALTH AND SAFETY BANS'

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published a list of the '10 most bizarre health bans or restrictions spotted in media coverage' over the last year. The list includes:

- children no longer allowed to take part in a sack race at sports day;
- schoolyard football games banned – unless the ball is made of sponge;
- kite flying on a popular tourist beach;
- stopping pupils from using playground monkey bars unsupervised.

The HSE says: 'Health and safety legislation exists to protect people from real risks at, or connected with, work. But it can be hard to see this from some of the stories that are reported.'

The full list is available at:
www.hse.gov.uk/news/bizarre-bans/index.htm

RED TAPE CHALLENGE

The new Red Tape Challenge website provides the opportunity for members of the public to comment on Health and Safety regulations as part of the UK coalition Government's drive for a common sense approach to health and safety.

The website is designed to promote open discussion of ways in which the aims of existing regulation can be fulfilled in the least burdensome way possible, and to allow people to comment on how HSE regulations might be simplified. The suggestions will be considered by the HSE as part of the Government's longer-term commitment to regulatory reform.

Please visit:
www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk
Also see Lord Young's review of health and safety – *Common Sense. Common Safety*, which makes recommendations for improving the way health and safety regulation is applied and tackling the compensation culture.
www.number10.gov.uk/wpcontent/uploads/402906_CommonSense_acc.pdf

DID YOU KNOW BOYS...

- Are good at special tasks and abstract reasoning
- Do better in brighter light
- Prefer salty foods
- Tend to move emotive material "down" in the brain to the more primitive brain stemmed movement to help stimulate their brains, to manage and relieve impulsive behaviour
- Boys' physical aggression often follows girls' verbal aggression

DID YOU KNOW GIRLS...

- Are good at memory and sensory intake
- Are 6 times more likely than boys to sign in tune
- Excel in dim light
- Are more sensitive to bitter tastes and prefer sweet tastes
- Process emotive material up to the most advanced upper regions of the brain, which makes them respond more flexibly to stimuli and more prone to processing pain and seeking help from others

"If we want more good men in the world, we must start treating boys with less blame and more understanding". Bringing out the best in boys begins early, especially in terms of sex education. Biddulph says "to raise boys who are respectful and empathic lovers, we need to start much earlier than adolescence. Boys also need the freedom from having to prove anything and to be allowed to feel comfortable with youthful exuberance."

Steve Biddulph (Raising Boys)

"CHILDREN NEED MODELS MORE THAN THEY NEED CRITICS."

JOSEPH JOUBERT, PENSÉES

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

EATING AS FAMILY AIDS TEEN HEALTH

Teenagers who sit down to family meals are less likely to be depressed or take risks with drugs, alcohol and sex, new research shows.

A new study commissioned by the Families Commission looking at the role of family meals in the health and wellbeing of young people is the first study on the issue in New Zealand.

It uses data collected nationally from more than 9000 secondary school pupils. It finds that those who eat with their families frequently are less likely to report suicidal thoughts, less likely to be smokers and less likely to indulge in binge-drinking, marijuana use and inconsistent contraception.

It says social changes such as more television channels, more mothers working and cheap fast food have altered the status of the family meal.

However, the good news for New Zealand is that one-third of young people reported sharing meals with their families seven or more times a week and an additional 40 per cent shared meals three to six times a week.

Author Jennifer Utter, a senior lecturer at Auckland University, said though the results were in line with similar studies in the United States and Britain, the information was still “really interesting and quite exciting”. Sitting down for dinner created

an opportunity for parents to check in with children and see how their day had been, she said.

Young people who ate with their parents reported better connectedness and better communication. “Family meals indicate strong, healthy relationships.”

The high proportion of families eating together was encouraging, she said. “A lot of families do seem to want to spend time together. It’s a really positive finding.”

Youthline national spokesman Stephen Bell said he was surprised how many people were eating as a family because there had been so many changes in society.

Previously a household would have only one breadwinner and there would always be someone at home for children to talk to.

Nowadays, it often took the income of two people to keep the family afloat and it would be harder for parents to have dinner with their children, he said.

“I would have probably been a little bit more pessimistic [about the number of people who found time to eat dinner together], but I think it’s great.”

Families throughout New Zealand should take note of the research, he said. “The protective factors that families can provide to young people is really paramount. Often there’s a big gap around experiences with

family. Family meals are a great ritual.”

Otago University psychologist Jane Millichamp said she did not think family dinners were as common as they used to be, but they were still necessary.

“It can be really hard when families are busy and kids have activities on, but even if you can sit down once or twice a week... Any chance you have as a parent to talk and get them to talk is important.”

Chief families commissioner Carl Davidson said teens who ate meals with their families reported better health, and were less likely to be depressed. “We probably all know that eating together is worthwhile, but this research shows that those shared meals aren’t just ‘nice to have’ but are actually a fundamental contributor to family wellbeing.”

CHEF SETS TABLE AT HOME FOR FAMILY INTERACTIVE FARE

Every night one of Wellington’s top chefs clears his schedule so he can cook for his favourite customers.

Executive chef Len Baldwin, who owns Tasting Room, The General Practitioner and The Flying Burrito Brothers, puts down his knives and heads home to his wife and three children in Island Bay.

He understands the importance of eating a well-cooked meal, but also realises how vital it is to sit down at the dining table and spend time with his family.



LACK OF OUTDOOR PLAY LINKED TO SHORT-SIGHTED CHILDREN

“It’s a good time to catch up with the kids and hear about their day. We try to keep it casual, but try to ask, ‘How is school and how are friends?’ Everyone is relaxed and chatty.”

Sitting down for a family meal every night let children know their parents had time for them and cared, Mr Baldwin said.

It was particularly important to talk to teenagers, because the onset of puberty was a huge change. Children started worrying about looks, attitudes and sporting achievements.

“They are trying to find themselves and start to compare themselves to others at school.” The television was switched off during meals “because when it’s on you just want everyone to shush. Sitting around a table you don’t want distractions.”

Son Stefan, 13, said he looked forward to sitting down to dinner and talking about his day. “It’s just a good time to reflect. It lets out some of your feelings.”

Mum Eva Baldwin said friends often told her they were having trouble talking to their children.

Many parents confronted their children about issues “with a purpose” rather than letting their children talk to them about it in a relaxed environment.

THE FINDINGS

- One-third of young people shared meals with their families seven or more times a week and an additional 40 per cent shared meals three to six times a week.
- Teenagers who frequently ate with their family were less likely to report suicidal thoughts.
- About 10 per cent of pupils who frequently shared meals with their families were smokers, compared with nearly 25 per cent of pupils who reported infrequent family meals.
- Even after accounting for age, gender, ethnicity and deprivation, there was a significant decrease in binge-drinking, marijuana use and inconsistent contraception use for those who ate with family frequently.

Natural light exposure is just one potential factor in a child’s eyesight. The time children spend outdoors could be linked to a reduced risk of being short-sighted, research suggests.

An analysis of eight previous studies by University of Cambridge researchers found that for each additional hour spent outside per week, the risk of myopia reduced by 2%. Exposure to natural light and time spent looking at distant objects could be key factors, they said.

The studies involved more than 10,000 children and adolescents.

Researchers are presenting their findings at the American Academy of Ophthalmology annual meeting in Florida.

Dr Justin Sherwin and his research team concluded that short-sighted children spent on average 3.7 fewer hours per week outdoors than those who either had normal vision or were long-sighted.

But they said the reasons why were not yet clear. They expected to find that children who spent more time outdoors also spent less time doing activities like reading, studying or playing computer games, but no such link was found in two of the eight studies which looked at this relationship.

“Any increase in time spent outdoors must be weighed against exposure to UV radiation.” Dr Justin Sherwin University of Cambridge However, Dr Sherwin said they would now need more precise data to try to understand which factors, such as increased use of distance vision, reduced use of near vision, natural ultraviolet light exposure or physical activity, are most important. There are also other factors to consider, he said.

RISK AND BENEFIT

“Any increase in time spent outdoors must be weighed against exposure to UV radiation - and the increased risk of skin cancer, cataracts and other cancers. On the other hand, increasing outdoor physical activity could protect against diabetes and obesity,

vitamin D deficiency and osteoporosis, for example,” he said.

Short-sightedness is a common eye condition that causes distant objects to appear blurred, while close objects can be seen clearly. Myopia is the medical term for short-sightedness.

It is much more common today in the UK and the United States than it was just 30 to 40 years ago. Approximately 1-2% of five-to seven-year-olds in the UK have myopia. About five million British people are short-sighted and some 200,000 of them will be seriously short-sighted.

In some parts of Asia, more than 80% of the population suffers from short-sightedness. Short-sightedness results from excessively long growth of the eyeball, or a steeply curved cornea.

Dr Susan Blakeney, optometric adviser at The College of Optometrists, said children were normally born long-sighted. “As they grow they become less long-sighted so that by the time children stop growing their eyesight should be perfect. “If a child is not born long-sighted enough then they will overshoot and end up short-sighted. This tends to happen around puberty.

“There are numerous factors which could influence that journey - the question is what is the key bit that really makes a big difference.”

“THERE ARE CHILDREN PLAYING IN THE STREET WHO COULD SOLVE SOME OF MY TOP PROBLEMS IN PHYSICS, BECAUSE THEY HAVE MODES OF SENSORY PERCEPTION THAT I LOST LONG AGO.”

**J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER,
QUOTED IN PEARLS OF WISDOM**

WELCOMING TAMARIKI AND WHANAU TO YOUR PROGRAMME

Grown ups never understand anything for themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them. Antoine Saint-Exupery, Le Petit Prince (The Little Prince), 1943.

Think about new situations which you have faced in the past, for example;

- The first day of a new job or course;
- Going to a social gathering where you did not know most of the people present;
- A holiday in another place

How did you feel? How did you behave?

- What things made you feel uncomfortable
- What put you at your ease?

Now think about the last two or three children who were new to your programme. How do you think they felt? What did you, your colleagues and the other children do make them feel comfortable?

In thinking about these children it is important to reflect on uncomfortable feelings you have had including;

- Being overloaded with information which you didn't have time to take in;
- Being excluded or ignored;
- Other people making false assumptions about why you were there;
- Being expected to join in activities or take on tasks which you had not been prepared for or were unwilling to do;
- Getting conflicting information from different people.

The things which helped you feel more comfortable may have included:

"NOTHING YOU DO FOR A CHILD IS EVER WASTED."

GARRISON KEILLOR, LEAVING HOME

- Having clear and accurate information in advance about what the situation would involve;
- Knowing why you are there;
- A friendly and welcoming reception from others;
- A safe place to put your belongings
- Individual attention from someone who supported you through the situation, making introductions and explaining anything you didn't understand;
- Other people understanding your reason for being there;
- Having time to adjust at your own pace without being pressurised to conform or perform before you were ready.

Most people, children and adults need support in adjusting to a new situation. When a new child visits or comes to the programme for the first time, ask yourself: 'Who is this child? What brings her to the programme? What does she bring with her in the way of interests, skills, past experiences, values, beliefs and expectations?' Try to draw close to the child and think about how she might be thinking.

In some settings new children are given a particular named worker – someone who will take special responsibility for the welfare of that child and help her to settle in. This worker is someone who can also exchange information with the caregiver about the child's adjustment to the programme or her behaviour and progress within it. Often the child will choose the adult with whom she wishes to form a particular bond – to share information or concerns with, to ask for help

or advice or simply to join in companionship in play and other activities. Even if there is a named worker policy in your setting there should be flexibility between the staff to offer the child the freedom to make such choices.

To set the scene involve the children in designing 'Welcome' posters for your door, entrance way or notice board. Encourage them to explore different ways of conveying a welcome message e.g. the word welcome in different languages.

There are many things you can do to help enable a new child to feel comfortable at the programme. Each child may need a different approach, depending on the child's individual needs and circumstances.

- Offer a smile and greeting
- Introduce yourself and others in the programme
- Find out the name of the child and make sure to pronounce it correctly
- Explain any routines – where to put their bags, where the toilets are etc
- Introduce the child to others. Encourage other children to involve the new child in their play and to show her the ropes.
- Give plenty of time for the child (and caregivers) to ask questions
- Give clear information to caregivers but don't overload them
- Encourage children to visit before they enrol just to get a feel of the place
- Provide an environment which offers interesting and stimulating opportunities for play
- Respect each child as individual and unique.

An older child may come alone to visit the setting. You will need equal sensitivity to recognise and meet what the older child or adolescent needs to help her settle. She may want just to observe for awhile a to find her own way into making social contacts and getting involved in activities. She may appreciate your involvement and help in making introductions. Offer her the same information and time to ask questions or share concerns as you would a younger child and his caregivers.

Get to know as much as you can about the child as soon as possible, ideally before she comes to the programme. This does not mean prying; ask only questions which have direct relevance to your being able to meet her needs: Such information includes:

- Language(s) spoken
- Medical conditions
- Special needs
- Family and emergency contacts
- Particular hobbies or interests

Let the children determine the pace at which they want to join in – but observe for ways in which you can help them feel included.

A child may have special needs in terms of diet, mobility, communication etc. She may require special adaptations or equipment to enable her to play or carry out tasks relating to personal independence.

Something to think about is ‘can you meet a child’s special needs before offering a place in your programme?’ Are there links with other agencies to get advice and support to help meet these needs?

Some children and caregivers will be very forthcoming about other aspects of their lives; income, divorce, medical or some other problem in the family. Such information must be kept confidential. Share with colleagues only information which is essential for them to care adequately for the child within the programme. Never share personal information about one child with another child or his caregivers.

Finally make a list of all the things you do to help welcome new children into your programme. See if you can add at least two new things to try.

LACK OF FREE PLAY AMONG CHILDREN IS CAUSING HARM, SAY EXPERTS IN AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PLAY



SUMMARY:

Unstructured play promotes gamesmanship, which is theoretically linked to the evolution of human intelligence.

Hovering helicopter parents who restrict their children’s unstructured play may actually harm, rather than help children, according to the latest issue of the *American Journal of Play*, a scholarly journal which has gathered a distinguished group of experts to probe the near-extinction of free play and its effects on children and society.

“Remarkably, over the last 50 years, opportunities for children to play freely have declined continuously and dramatically in the United States and other developed nations; and that decline continues, with serious negative consequences for children’s physical, mental, and social development,” said Guest Editor Peter Gray, a research professor of psychology at Boston College. “This special issue of the *American Journal of Play* reviews the evidence for the crucial roles of play in children’s development and proposes ways we may create a world in which play - especially free outdoor play with other children - is once again a normative part of childhood.”

“THE SPECIAL VALUE OF CHILDREN’S AGE-MIXED PLAY”:

Gray notes that the modern segregation of children into same-age groups, common in today’s classrooms and school yards, may not be optimal for child development. He says that during age-mixed play, older, more skilled participants “provide scaffolds that raise the level of the younger participants’ play” and stretch their abilities to higher levels. He cites other studies in which older children were observed exposing younger children to more complex concepts of literacy, math, and sociability. By interacting with younger children, older students develop increased capacities to nurture, lead, and learn by teaching.

Adapted from The American Journal of Play, an interdisciplinary scholarly journal devoted solely to the study of play, is published by The Strong in Rochester, New York. The journal is available free online at www.journalofplay.org.

“CHILDREN’S GAMES ARE HARDLY GAMES. CHILDREN ARE NEVER MORE SERIOUS THAN WHEN THEY PLAY.”
MONTAIGNE, ESSAYS

TEN THINGS YOUR
STUDENT WITH
AUTISM WISHES YOU
KNEW
(...AND IT MAKES
SENSE FOR OTHER
KIDS TOO!)



1. BEHAVIOUR IS COMMUNICATION.

All behaviour occurs for a reason. It tells you, even when my words can't, how I perceive what is happening around me. Negative behaviour interferes with my learning process. But merely interrupting these behaviours is not enough; teach me to exchange these behaviours with proper alternatives so that real learning can flow.

Start by believing this: I truly do want to learn to interact appropriately. No child wants the negative feedback we get from "bad" behaviour. Negative behaviour usually means I am overwhelmed by disordered sensory systems, cannot communicate my wants or needs or don't understand what is expected of me. Look beyond the behaviour to find the source of my resistance. Keep notes as to what happened immediately before the behaviour: people involved, time of day, activities, settings. Over time, a pattern may emerge.

2. NEVER ASSUME ANYTHING.

Without factual backup, an assumption is only a guess. I may not know or understand the rules. I may have heard the instructions but not understood them. Maybe I knew it yesterday but can't retrieve it today. Ask yourself:

Are you sure I really know how to do what is being asked of me? If I suddenly need to run to the bathroom every time I'm asked to do a math sheet, maybe I don't know how or fear my effort will not be good enough. Stick with me through enough repetitions of the task to where I feel competent. I may need more practice to master tasks than other kids.

Are you sure I actually know the rules? Do I understand the reason for the rule (safety, economy, health)? Am I breaking the rule because there is an underlying cause? Maybe I pinched a snack out of my lunch bag early

because I was worried about finishing my science project, didn't eat breakfast and am now famished.

3. LOOK FOR SENSORY ISSUES FIRST.

A lot of my resistant behaviours come from sensory discomfort. One example is fluorescent lighting, which has been shown over and over again to be a major problem for children like me. The hum it produces is very disturbing to my hypersensitive hearing, and the pulsing nature of the light can distort my visual perception, making objects in the room appear to be in constant movement. An incandescent lamp on my desk will reduce the flickering, as will the new, natural light tubes. Or maybe I need to sit closer to you; I don't understand what you are saying because there are too many noises "in between" - that lawnmower outside the window, Jasmine whispering to Tanya, chairs scraping, pencil sharpener grinding.

Ask the school occupational therapist for sensory-friendly ideas for the classroom. It's actually good for all kids, not just me.

4. PROVIDE ME A BREAK TO ALLOW FOR SELF-REGULATION BEFORE I NEED IT.

A quiet, carpeted corner of the room with some pillows, books and headphones allows me a place to go to re-group when I feel overwhelmed, but isn't so far physically removed that I won't be able to rejoin the activity flow of the classroom smoothly.

5. TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO IN THE POSITIVE RATHER THAN THE IMPERATIVE.

"You left a mess by the sink!" is merely a statement of fact to me. I'm not able to infer that what you really mean is "Please rinse out your paint cup and put the paper towels in the trash." Don't make me guess or have to figure out what I should do.

6. KEEP YOUR EXPECTATIONS REASONABLE.

That all-school assembly with hundreds of kids packed into bleachers and some guy droning on about the candy sale is uncomfortable and meaningless to me. Maybe I'd be better off helping the school secretary put together the newsletter.

7. HELP ME TRANSITION BETWEEN ACTIVITIES.

It takes me a little longer to motor plan moving from one activity to the next. Give me a five-minute warning and a two minute warning before an activity changes — and build a few extra minutes in on your end to compensate. A simple clock face or timer on my desk gives me a visual cue as to the time of the next transition and helps me handle it more independently.

8. DON'T MAKE A BAD SITUATION WORSE.

I know that even though you are a mature adult, you can sometimes make bad decisions in the heat of the moment. I truly don't mean to melt down, show anger or otherwise disrupt your classroom. You can help me get over it more quickly by not responding with inflammatory behaviour of your own. Beware of these responses that prolong rather than resolve a crisis:

- Raising pitch or volume of your voice.

I hear the yelling and shrieking, but not the words.

- Mocking or mimicking me. Sarcasm, insults or name-calling will not embarrass me out of the behaviour.
- Making unsubstantiated accusations
- Invoking a double standard
- Comparing me to a sibling or other student
- Bringing up previous or unrelated events
- Lumping me into a general category ("kids like you are all the same")

9. CRITICIZE GENTLY.

Be honest - how good are you at accepting "constructive" criticism? The maturity and self-confidence to be able to do that may be light years beyond my abilities right now. Should you never correct me? Of course not. But do it kindly, so that I actually hear you.

- Please! Never, ever try to impose discipline or correction when I am angry, distraught, over stimulated, shut down, anxious or otherwise emotionally unable to interact with you.
- Again, remember that I will react as much, if not more, to the qualities of your voice than to the actual words. I will hear the shouting and the annoyance, but I will not understand the words and therefore will not be able to figure out what I did wrong. Speak in low tones and lower your body as well, so that you are communicating on my level rather than towering over me.
- Help me understand the inappropriate behaviour in a supportive, problem-solving way rather than punishing or scolding me. Help me pin down the feelings that triggered the behavior. I may say I was angry but maybe I was afraid, frustrated, sad or jealous. Probe beyond my first response.
- Practice or role-play - show me a better way to handle the situation next time. A storyboard, photo essay or social story helps. Expect to role-play lots over time. There are no one-time fixes. And when I do get it right "next time," tell me right away.
- It helps me if you yourself are modelling proper behaviour for responding to criticism.

10. OFFER REAL CHOICES - AND ONLY REAL CHOICES.

Don't offer me a choice or ask a "Do you want...?" question unless are willing to accept no for an answer. "No" may be my

honest answer to "Do you want to read out loud now?" or "Would you like to share paints with William?" It's hard for me to trust you when choices are not really choices at all.

- You take for granted the amazing number of choices you have on a daily basis. You constantly choose one option over others knowing that both having choices and being able to choose provides you control over your life and future. For me, choices are much more limited, which is why it can be harder to feel confident about myself. Providing me with frequent choices helps me become more actively engaged in everyday life.
- Whenever possible, offer a choice within a 'have-to'. Rather than saying: "Write your name and the date on the top of the page," say: "Would you like to write your name first, or would you like to write the date first?" or "Which would you like to write first, letters or numbers?" Follow by showing me: "See how Jason is writing his name on his paper?"
- Giving me choices helps me learn appropriate behaviour, but I also need to understand that there will be times when you can't. When this happens, I won't get as frustrated if I understand why:
 1. "I can't give you a choice in this situation because it is dangerous. You might get hurt."
 2. "I can't give you that choice because it would be bad for Danny" (have negative effect on another child).
 3. "I give you lots of choices but this time it needs to be an adult choice."

The last word: believe. That car guy Henry Ford said, "Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you are usually right." Believe that you can make a difference for me.

It requires accommodation and adaptation, but autism is an open-ended disability. There are no inherent upper limits on achievement. I can sense far more than I can communicate, and the number one thing I can sense is whether or not you think I "can do it."

Expect more and you will get more. Encourage me to be everything I can be, so that I can stay the course long after I've left your classroom.

YOU REALLY GOT ME!

THE CHILD WHO GETS UNDER YOUR SKIN

When a certain child particularly irritates you, ask yourself why you feel this way and what the child might be trying to tell you.

A group of playworkers running a holiday club were discussing nine year old Peter, a polite, well behaved boy who seemed rather isolated from his peers. “He’s always alongside a group, never in the group,” said one. There was a murmur of agreement and a moment of reflective silence before another burst out, *“Oh, I know it’s an awful thing to say, but I’m not surprised, I can’t stand that kid, he really gets under my skin.”*

When we choose to work with children we do so with a degree of pride in our ability to relate to and understand them. We can feel at best disconcerted, and at worst guilty, when we find ourselves irritated by or disinterested in a child. So what do we mean when we say a child ‘gets under our skin?’ Usually, this is when we find ourselves responding to them in a way we don’t really want or like. The child may make us feel we have to respond to them instantly, or they may haunt us in the sense that we find ourselves thinking about them very frequently, sometimes constantly. Sometimes “getting under my skin” can mean we are drawn to a child and we feel we want to be more involved with them; often it means we find we want to protect ourselves from contact with the child. Peter’s playworker admitted she was so irritated by Peter she tried to avoid him, “There’s just something about him . . . he’s so smarmy with it . . . it makes my flesh creep.” She found it very difficult to think about Peter and what his behaviour might mean. Interestingly, Peter did not have the same effect on her colleagues, but

they all agreed that another child, eight year old Marie, got under all their skins with her immature behaviour and by talking in a baby voice. “I think she thinks it’s cute,” said one playworker, “it’s not, it’s just really annoying.” So why is it that some children get under everyone’s skin and others just impact on one or two members of staff?

“GETTING UNDER YOUR SKIN” AS A COMMUNICATION

I have already talked about how babies communicate by projecting feelings – they tell the adult how they feel by making the adult feel what they are feeling. And this carries on into childhood. We have been thinking about how children, by adults’ standards, have limited ways of telling us when they have a worry, and how if they haven’t got the language or if they don’t understand their own confusion, then they use behaviour as a communication. Peter behaved in a courteous and almost “goody-goody” manner but his playworker wasn’t impressed by his politeness. Indeed, she felt almost aggressive towards him. Of course, all children use getting under their parents’ skin as a way of bonding with them; they are trying to get as close to their parents as possible in any way possible. But when the child gets under other people’s skin, we need to think about what might be going on.

Peter was the youngest of three children and the only boy. His much older sisters were clever and competent and, as emerged later, he felt they took up most of his busy parents’ attention. Peter admitted to feeling a little left out in the family, pointing out pertinently, “My sisters never had to go to holiday club, my mum didn’t work then.” It was not surprising that this resentment made him feel jealous of his sisters but he was afraid to show his anger in the family for fear it might make him even less acceptable to his parents. So he protected himself and everyone else from his rage by being excessively well-behaved and polite. But feelings have a way of seeping out into sensitive and receptive adults around a child – Peter was making his playworker feel his anger so she could understand him.

Often the child who gets under our skin is the one we are most likely to be able to understand and help. Unconsciously, Peter had sensed his playworker had something to offer him, and indeed she had because she too had struggled with envy and rage as a child. Paradoxically, the children (and adults!) we most dislike are often those who remind us of some abject or unpleasant part of ourselves we would rather forget. Peter and his playworker had got into a muddle in their relationship. Unconsciously, he had identified her as someone who knew how it felt to be him: she, on the other hand, didn’t want to be reminded of some of the pain of her own childhood. Peter had less impact on other staff because he was not projecting



a part of himself into them in the same way.

THE CHILD WHO GETS UNDER EVERYONE'S SKIN

Let us now think about Marie who affected all the adults in the same way. Marie was the eldest of five children, there was less than a year between her and her younger sister. Her mother was puzzled by her immature behaviour in club as at home, “. . . she is very grown up and a good help with the little ones.” Marie never used a “baby voice” at home.

When children come to club they bring with them an unconscious expectation of how the adults will treat them. They base this expectation on how their parents have treated them. The child with authoritarian parents and the child with laissez faire parents may approach their playworkers with very different attitudes. Marie's parents had always expected her to be more responsible and grown up than was possible for a small child. In a sense her “baby needs” had not been met as other babies had arrived in the family so quickly. We can understand her babyish behaviour at club as her way of warning her playworkers not to expect too much of her and to allow her to be a small child in club. She had cast them in the role of demanding parents before they had

all had a chance to get to know each other. Marie was a worrying (and worried!) child in the sense that getting under everyone's skin was a sign of her desperation. However, it was also a sign that she still believed there were adults around who would listen to and understand her. Indeed, once both Marie and Peter's playworkers began to respond to how they felt, rather than to the way they behave, they became much less troubling. Marie's playworkers were careful not to give her any responsibilities in club, and as Peter's playworker was able to give him some individual time and attention, he slowly became more ready to show her his anger and unhappiness.

WHEN WE WANT TO DO MORE

Sometimes a child may get under our skin in the sense that we find ourselves always wanting to do that little bit more for them. This is when we need to think about the difference between really liking and understanding a child and the child who gets under our skin to such an extent that we find ourselves doing unusual things. We may feel we need to be in contact with this child outside club or buy them presents or pay for them to go on trips, for example. Such a child may feel desperate in their belief that adults can't listen to or won't understand them. They may try to fuse themselves into us in an adhesive way, making us feel we

have to help them or disaster will happen; this, of course, is exactly how they feel.

MANAGING THE CHILD WHO GETS UNDER YOUR SKIN

- Ask yourself “how does this child really make me feel?”
- Ask yourself if it is possible that the child feels the same but needs to deny it.
- Ask yourself who this child reminds you of and whether this memory could be colouring your response to the child?
- When you want to do more, pause and reflect on what you think you are actually doing by doing more, and whether or not you can achieve the same results in club.
- Remember, if a child gets under your skin, you are likely to have the potential to work well with them.

Taken from A Playworkers Guide to UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

Andrea Clifford-Poston - available from the OSCAR Network Library

NEWS AND INFORMATION

MORE SOCIAL WORKERS TO FOCUS ON CHILDREN.

Social Development Minister Paula Bennett has announced an increase in numbers of social workers both in schools and on the frontline. “Firstly, I am announcing an additional 149 full-time social workers to support children in low decile primary schools,” said Ms Bennett. This will extend Social Workers in Schools (SWiS) to all decile 1-3 schools and increases the number of those with SWiS from 285 to 673. The second announcement regards funding for an extra 96 frontline Child, Youth and Family care and protection social workers. “Protecting children is an absolute priority and we need enough qualified social workers focused exclusively on children to do that,” said Ms Bennett.

<http://www.community.net.nz/communitycentre/news/national/moresocialwork.htm>

LAUNCH OF NEW ZEALAND FAMILY VIOLENCE CLEARINGHOUSE WEBSITE

Families Commission,
The launch of a new New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (NZFVCH) website will give New Zealand greater access to family violence research says the Families Commission.

The Families Commission, which has responsibility for the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, is pleased to announce that the new website is operational. This project is part of a new partnership between the Commission and the University of Auckland.

“The purpose of the website,” says Chief Families Commissioner Carl Davidson, “is to make information available to people working in violence prevention. Better information means better results, and it’s

in the interests of all New Zealanders that our response to family violence draws on the best research from around the world. “The vision of the Families Commission is to be a centre of excellence for knowledge about New Zealand families and whanau. Working with the NZFVCH is part of that vision to ensure we can advocate for the interests of families from a strong evidential base,” says Mr Davidson.

“Evidence must form the basis of our response to preventing family violence, and campaigns such as our White Ribbon Campaign to end violence against women and the its not OK campaign, will benefit from fast and efficient access to the best evidence from around the world.

“The Clearinghouse draws on the expert leadership and academic excellence exemplified by Dr Janet Fanslow, whose work has contributed greatly to understanding family violence in New Zealand, and Associate Professor Robyn Dixon, who has extensive experience in leading multidisciplinary teams in research and evaluation projects,” Mr Davidson says.

“By ensuring high quality research is readily available we are in a much better position to move New Zealand to a violence-free future.”

Visit the NZFVCH website at:
<http://www.nzfvc.org.nz>

NEW DISABILITY INNOVATION FUND

NZ Government,
The Minister for Social Development and Employment, Paula Bennett and the Minister for Disability Issues, Tariana Turia, have announced the new Disability Innovation Fund, making \$500,000 available for innovative ways of getting disabled people into work or retaining them in work.

“A priority for me is to get people into work. This fund supports disabled people into

work and also supports employers to retain disabled workers,” said Minister Bennett.

“I am particularly pleased that all innovative proposals that are received from the sector will be shared with the welfare reform team to inform its work programme on supporting disabled people into employment.”

This fund recognises that the employment rate of disabled people is about half that of non disabled people. The fund is aimed at supporting innovative projects from the employers, NGOs or disabled people’s organisations to either get disabled people into employment or to retain them in employment.

The Innovation Fund is targeted to three key areas:

1. Innovative projects from employers to retain current employers in employment who either have an existing disability or who have acquired a disability including chronic health condition or mental health condition.
2. Innovative projects from employers to get disabled people into employment.
3. Innovative projects from the NGO sector or disabled people organisations to support disabled people into self employment.

The Government is looking for organisations to come up with projects that aren’t currently funded through the many existing employment programmes targeted at disabled people.

This fund should provides employers with greater choice on how they can employ disabled people and also supports disabled people who want to start their own business.

“Disabled people have the right to work and I am really pleased that we can support them and their whanau with different and innovative ways into employment. This fund is one of the first results from joint work by disabled person’s organisations, employers and government,” said Minister Turia.

Applications for the fund open on 14 November 2011.

Further information about the fund and how to apply will be published on the Ministry of Social Development website: <http://www.msd.govt.nz>

CHANGES TO THE HOLIDAYS ACT AND THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT

CHANGES TO THE HOLIDAYS ACT 2003 AND THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT 2000 HAVE BEEN PASSED BY PARLIAMENT.

THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT 2010 AND HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT ACT 2010 INTRODUCE A WIDE RANGE OF LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS.

THE MAIN CHANGES TO THE HOLIDAYS ACT INCLUDE: THE ABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES TO CASH IN A MAXIMUM OF ONE WEEK OF ANNUAL HOLIDAYS.

CASHING-UP ANNUAL HOLIDAYS

As of 1 April 2011, employees are able to ask their employer to pay out in cash up to one week of their minimum entitlement to annual holidays per year.

The Amendment Act introducing cashing up annual holidays provides that a request may be made only in relation to an entitlement year that begins on or after 1 April 2011. Employees cannot cash up annual holiday entitlements that arose before 1 April 2011.

An entitlement year is defined as beginning on the anniversary of the employee's employment. An employee who becomes entitled to annual holidays on their anniversary date on or after 1 April 2011 is able to request cash up of up to one week of their annual holidays during the 12 month period of their entitlement year that runs from that point.

For example, an employee with an anniversary date of 1 June is able to request that up to one week is cashed up of their four week entitlement that they receive on 1 June 2011. Their request can be made at any point in the entitlement year that runs from 1 June 2011 to 1 June 2012.

Cashing up annual holidays can only be at the employee's request and the request must be made in writing. Employees may request to cash up less than a week at a time. More than one request may be made until a maximum of one week of the employee's annual holidays is paid out in each entitlement year (the period of 12 months' continuous employment from the anniversary of the employee's starting date). Any request must be considered within a reasonable time and may be declined – unless the employer has a policy that does not allow cashing up. The employee must be advised of the decision in writing and the employer is not required to provide a reason for their decision.

If an employer agrees to pay out a portion of the employee's annual holidays, the payment should be made as soon as practicable, which will usually be the next pay day. The value of the payment must be at least the same as if the employee had taken the holidays.

An employer cannot pressure an employee into cashing up holidays. Cashing up cannot be raised in wage or salary negotiations or be a condition of employment. Requests to cash up cannot be included in an employment agreement. However, an employment agreement may outline the process for making such a request. The process must meet the minimum requirements set out in the legislation.

Employers may have a workplace policy that they will not consider any requests to cash up annual holidays. This can apply to the whole or only some parts of the business. The policy can only be on whether the employer will consider any requests. It cannot be about the amount of annual holidays an employee can cash up or the number of requests an employee may make. An employer should consult

with employees on the development of such a policy, and new employees of the policy when they make an offer of employment, as part of their good faith obligations.

If an employer does not have a workplace policy on cashing up that applies to the employee, they must consider any request to cash up annual holidays in good faith.

If an employer is found to have incorrectly paid out a portion of the employee's annual holidays where the employee did not request it, the employee is still entitled to take the portion of annual holidays concerned and to keep the money. The employer may also face a penalty.

If an employer has agreed to pay out a portion of the employee's annual holidays, but the employer and employee cannot agree on the proportion or payment amount, a Labour Inspector may determine the proportion or amount for them.

There are other details that employers and employees considering cashing up holidays will need to know, for example how it affects superannuation payments, working for families, child support and income tax and what happens when there is parental leave. The Department of Labour can assist with information about parental leave and you can contact us on 0800 20 90 20.

For tax related matters please contact Inland Revenue on 0800 227 774 or go to www.ird.govt.nz.

Sourced from www.dol.govt.nz

The coverage of the changes to the act will be continued in depth in up and coming SNOOPs for more information refer to the Department of Labours Website www.dol.govt.nz/er/actchanges/

PLAY AND PARTICIPATION

Play is children's priority – their agenda. When we support their right to play, we support their agenda; we collaborate with them and this implies that we work alongside them – we offer ideas, we support their ideas, we have a common goal.



Play is defined as freely chosen and personally directed by those who are playing – quality playworkers intervene in children's play with sensitivity using continuous risk/benefit evaluation to make sure that they adulterate as little as possible. If those of us who have an interest in children's play are to take a participative approach, we need to be aware of how we might adulterate play (and children's participation in decisions related to one of the aspects of their lives that is most important to them) through our attitude and belief system, the decisions we make, and the actions we take.

Article 31 of the Convention, stating children's right to play, is a well-known mantra to many of us who provide or campaign for children's right to play. Article 12, which relates to children's right to participate in decision making, may be less familiar.

Article 12 states parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Given that play is so important to all children we need to be careful that any participation they have in decision making is meaningful and does not unnecessarily curtail their time and freedom to play.

WE CAN DO THIS BY:

Making sure we take a considered approach – that we are asking the right questions and that children can make informed choices, for instance, we cannot make a choice between

a trip to the seaside and a day in the forest if we have no idea what either experience offers, we can't choose how to equip a new playground if our only experience is swings and slides. This is particularly important for some groups of children; they can be left out of decision making processes because traditionally others may have made decisions for them – they may not have experience of making choices; because it may take more time and effort to find out their opinions; or because they have a narrow range of experiences.

Sensitively observing how they behave, where and how they choose to play, how they use the environment where they are playing, listening and using our knowledge of play theory and our experience to reflect on what they might want or need to enhance their play – because they have shown us what they want – they didn't need to go through the effort of filling in a form, or sticking a red dot on a chart, or even coming to tell us, and their play isn't interrupted at all.

Respecting children's judgement. When children participate in decision making processes, we make sure that we respect their contribution, act upon it and feedback to them. The decisions that children are involved in need not be 'easy' or 'trivial' – they can do more than choosing the flavour of squash on offer – there are some play settings in Wales where children are meaningfully involved in selecting playworkers for employment. If we show children that their contribution is valued they are far more likely to want to contribute to their own community now and to be part

of democratic processes in the future.

Sticking to our principles – the Playwork Principles say that the role of the playworker is to support all children in the creation of a space in which they can play. This statement implies participation – it is about all children being supported to plan, negotiate and resource their play and to make decisions for themselves about their play environment.

Note: We would expand this to cover any form of provision for children's play – it doesn't simply apply to playworkers. If children are meaningfully involved in, for instance, the siting and equipping of a local play area we are likely to see better usage rates and more care taken of the equipment.

Supporting children to feel comfortable and confident in being honest, being aware that many children like to please adults – they might make decisions based on what they think we want them to say. This means having a relaxed and 'equal' relationship – simply because we are older than children does not mean we are more important than they are, and none of us who are adults can truly understand what it is like to be a child in today's world better than children themselves.

Using participation as a foundation of our work – true participation is an ongoing process. It is sustained rather than a 'one off', it needs to be part of the whole ethos of the service we provide.

This article was reproduced with the kind permission of the team at Play Wales. www.playwales.org.uk

SUMMER GREETINGS

NGĀ MIHI O TE RAUMATI

Impress your friends and whānau (family) this summer with cool Māori phrases, for every occasion. Use them when you're on holiday, out in the sun, swimming, at the movies, at the marae or meeting someone for the first time. There are also phrases you can use at Christmas, New Year, Waitangi Day and Valentine's Day.

Hararei : Holiday

Kei te aha koe i ngā rā hararei?

~ What are you doing for the holidays?

Kei te haere ahau ki Kororāreka.

~ I am going to Russell.

Kei hea a Kororāreka?

~ Where is Russell?

Kei te Tai Tokerau.

~ In the Far North.

Tō waimarie hoki!

~ You are so lucky!

Haumarū i te hihi o te rā : Sun Safety

Pania te ārai hihirā i mua i tō haere ki waho.

~ Put sun block on before you go out in the sun.

Whakamaua tō potae me ō mōhiti pango.

~ Wear your hat and sunglasses.

Te āhua nei kei te whero haere koe.

~ Looks like you're getting sun burnt.

Whakamaua anō he ārai hihirā.

~ Put some more sun block on.

Sourced from <http://www.korero.maori.nz/news/mlw/ideas/specialoccasions.html>
Where you can find loads more information

BOARD AND HAVING FUN!

GAME REVIEWS BY MR AWESOME - KIDS WORLD KENDAL OSCAR



MMM...BRAINS!

By Twilight Creations, INC

3-5 players

Twilight Creations is famous for its Zombies games (haven't played a game that hasn't been undead based yet) and this dice game has proven popular with the kids. The overall point of the game is to be the zombie that ends up with all the brains. To do this each player has up to three rolls with five dice to get the best totals of brains to add to their collection. Once all the brains from the middle have been collected...it gets personal! Dice colours dictate which player you are stealing from and players are eliminated once they are out of brains (well you need at least one brain to now what you are doing!).

The game teaches chance and maths as rolling brains on the dice can multiply your collecting. The game takes about 15 minutes to play and suitable for children of all ages 5-99 although the younger ones may need help with multiplying/adding depending on their maths levels.

Prices as of 22 November: \$22.99
www.mightyape.co.nz
Score: 3/5

HEY, THAT'S MY FISH!

By Fantasy Flight Games

2-4 players

This very cute game features greedy penguins that are out to get as many fish off the icebergs as they can. Each player controls 2-4 penguins that move across icebergs to gather fish for their own private stash. However the other player's penguins are out to get the fish too and once a fish has been gathered, gaps appear in the icebergs that cannot be crossed. Very quickly this cute game can turn highly strategic and mean as you may end up stranding other players on icebergs or forcing other players to change strategies as your move causes them to say "HEY, THAT'S MY FISH!"

The game takes about five minutes to setup and about ten minutes to play. The pieces are very good quality and the game comes in three versions. The Deluxe, Family and Standard version. There is very little difference in gameplay although I would recommend the compact standard version with the considerable price difference.

Prices as of 22 November:
Standard Version \$17.99
Deluxe/Family \$52.99 to \$64.99
www.mightyape.co.nz
Score: 5/5

OSCAR NETWORK TRAINING AND EVENT CALENDAR TERM 1 2012

EVENT	BRIEF RUN-DOWN	DATE	TIME & PLACE	COST (GST INCLUSIVE)
North-West Cluster	Suitable for all Staff and Management	Tuesday 14th February	10am - 12 noon St Patricks After School Plynlimon Road, Bryndwr	Free
North Canterbury Cluster	Suitable for all Staff and Management • Training to be advised	Wednesday 15th February	10am – 11am (Cluster) 11am – 1pm (Training) Rangiora War Memorial Hall Albert St, Rangiora	Cluster: Free Training: \$30 members \$75 non-members
South-East Cluster	Suitable for all Staff and Management	Thursday 16th February	10am – 12 noon Waltham School Hall Cnr Vienna & Hastings St East	Free
Core Training	• Health & Safety 1	Tuesday 21st February	10am – 12.30pm The Network Office 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	\$30 members \$75 non-members
Evening Training	• Child Development	Thursday 23rd February	7 – 9.30pm The Network Office 25 Disraeli St, Addington	\$30 members \$75 non-members
Training Day	Suitable for all Staff and Management. • Brochure sent out nearer to time	Saturday 3rd March	9.15am – 3.15pm Waltham School Hall Cnr Vienna & Hastings St East	\$50 members \$150 non-members
Management Morning	• Employment	Wednesday 7th March	9.30am – 12.30pm The Network Office 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	Free
West Coast Training	Suitable for all Staff and Management • Training advised nearer to time	Friday 23rd March Saturday 24th March	6 – 7pm, (Cluster) 7 – 9pm (Training) 9.30am – 12.30pm (Training) Karoro Training Centre 180 Tainui Street, Greymouth	Cluster: Free Training: \$30 members \$75 non-members Both sessions: \$50 members \$150 non-members

