

SIMPLE PLEASURES
I'M BORED.
UNDERSTANDING THE
LAZY CHILD
NATURE DEFICIT
DISORDER
ACTIVE PLAY AND ADHD
THE DIRT ON DIRT
FLOW: BEING HAPPY
AND BEING IN CONTROL
CHRISTCHURCH: NO
GALLERY REQUIRED



"WITHOUT ICE CREAM THERE WOULD BE DARKNESS AND CHAOS."

DON KARDONG, FORMER U.S. OLYMPIC MARATHONER, AUTHOR, SPEAKER AND CONSULTANT



**"NOTHING IS A WASTE OF TIME
IF YOU USE THE EXPERIENCE WISELY."**
AUGUSTE RODIN (1804-1917), SCULPTOR



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.

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

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
- Todd Foundation
- Lion Foundation
- Sutherland Trust

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23 THINGS EVERY CHILD SHOULD DO BEFORE TURNING 13

What would you add?

Wallow in mud

Run down a dune, roll down a hill

Swim in an ocean, lake, or river

Touch the sky with your toes

Climb a tree, scale a boulder

Jump off a rope swing

Build a fort for a secret club

Dig a hole deeper than you are tall

Scrape a knee, bruise an elbow, or break an arm

Hang upside down

Eat dirt

Throw a snowball

Invent a recipe

**Sell homemade lemonade from a homemade
lemonade stand**

Make something with a cardboard box

**Take apart a piece of machinery and put it back
together again**

Crown yourself King or Queen of the forest

Catch a bug in your hands

Build a fire

Plant something

Jump in a pile of leaves

Bury a treasure and draw a treasure map

Wear a cape

From Kaboom.org

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Simple Pleasures

It's difficult to reflect on the freedoms of our past childhood without comparing the culture that we lived in then with the one that we live in now. Our parents and those responsible for our care weren't completely bonkers to let us out to play in the way that we did, they simply lived in a different culture.

Today's children are often disparaged for not playing out, but we can't blame them if the culture we have created either directly or indirectly, fails to support them playing outside.

Twenty-five years ago, I was 7 years old. I went and called for my friends and we walked to the woods three quarters of a mile away, we played there for hours with no means of contacting our carers. We could all tell the time because when mum said she wanted us to be back by three, it meant three, if we were late she would be out of her head with worry, and hysterical at us when we returned. But for the preceding hours she just had to resign herself to hoping we would be safe; there was no mobile phone to keep a check on us, we had no ID if we

got knocked over – if one of us were hurt or needed help one of the others would run and get it.

We played all the way on the journey to the woods, sharing stories, climbing from tree to tree in the graveyard, playing tag along a stretch of windy road, and rolling stones down a hillside before rolling down it ourselves – landing in a heap at the bottom of the hill before starting play fighting.

These play fights would more often than not end with somebody in tears and a fall out, leaving the innocent players to mediate and save the day, knowing that if any sulkers went home it would result in parental involvement and none of us wanted that. That was bound to spoil things more than they were already.

When we reached the woods, we built dens, explored nature, and played in the river, never once worrying about stranger danger even though it was no less of a threat then than it is now. We made secret fires, but we never burnt ourselves badly, and best of all we climbed high in to the trees and spent

time up there talking and looking. We made swings, some that were rubbish and just bashed us in to the tree on the return, and some of which were amazing – sending us high out over steep woodland floor which fell away from us the further out we dared swing.

At eight we built tree houses with found materials and borrowed tools. We did this with no supervision. We inevitably snagged our clothes, bashed our thumbs, sustained small cuts, bruises and grazes, as we learnt and perfected the skills we needed. Other gangs would always wreck the tree house sooner or later, and secretly I am sure we all shed a tear of frustration, but we learnt a little about the darker side of human nature from the experience.

At ten we played until late in to the evening, tearing around the streets on our bikes, or playing army, or hide and seek games across a large piece of common land surrounded by houses. Army always ended in a real fight between some of the players, it was one of the times when all the kids joined in playing at the same game.



At twelve I started work on the local farm in my spare time. I rode on the back of heavily laden trailers down rough farm track, I learnt to build, to roof, and to drive. I still have a picture of myself high atop a steel roof joist twenty or thirty feet above a concrete floor; no scaffolding any safety equipment – just my own wits and sense of balance to stop me from falling off.

Our parents and carers weren't mad, they didn't disregard our safety; they were scared when we did dangerous things, they worried when we were out of sight, they feared for our safety when we were late returning, they were distraught when we were hurt, but that was their lot - they expected no more. That was what being a parent was about - you had to let your kids play, and risk was an intrinsic part of everything we did as children.

Today due to cultural change and parental fears for children's welfare, it is well recognised that children no longer have the affordances that we had as children. It is for this reason that there is such an acute focus on staffed play provision, and the development of compensatory play enclaves,

where children can be supported in their pursuit of simple pleasures by supportive adult workers. Where their play space is designed to compensate for the erosion of the natural spaces that children would have been able to access historically. However we have a problem, not only are parents concerned for their children's welfare, they are victim to media developed hysteria with regard to the health and safety obligations of providers, who themselves are victim to the limiting local implementation of health and safety policy and recommendations which are overzealously precautionary as a result of the fear of litigation.

Perhaps the single most differentiating factor between today's childhood and yesterday's childhood is **BLAME** there seems to be a belief that every action deserves a reaction, usually in the form of remonstrance or compensation. The belief that if you have an accident somebody must be at fault, and you can't play without having an accident. I mean you really can't play without having an accident.

So we find ourselves providing for children's

play where recommendation, legislation, litigation, and parental fears all combine to create a culture where risk, challenge, excitement, danger and fear are all but prohibited from our service delivery.

Today we talk about the provision of compensatory opportunities to replace the ones we found naturally. The focus on risk is not about developing an agenda that promotes risk at all costs, about an agenda that seeks to turn play provision into an adrenalin junky's paradise – it's an agenda that seeks to develop an understanding of the vital role that risk plays in children's play, an agenda that champions children's right to climb trees, make swings, ride bikes, roller-skate, build dens and tree houses, use tools, fall out, fight and make friends, to have fires, to get wet and messy, and to be afforded the opportunity to have supportive adults who feel empowered to provide environments and opportunities fit for children to play without the constant fear of **BLAME**. It is an agenda that celebrates the simple pleasures that make childhood complete.

www.playwales.org.uk

RESOURCES

CELEBRATING YOUTH HUB BARBADOES

The Canterbury earthquakes displaced swathes of businesses, families and communities across the region, but what has the effect been on the young people in our community?

Take a walk down Barbadoes Street and you'll stumble across a group of very ordinary inner-city cottages housing an extraordinary array of services for the city's young people. Welcome to the Youth Hub Barbadoes - a great example of what can be achieved when people work together; multiple agencies contribute to a single ethos and the corporate sector joins in to demonstrate its commitment to youth.

"Services for young people went from being fragmented before the earthquakes to being displaced after them" said Actionworks Manager, Peter Young. He recalls cases where young people were simply overwhelmed by the earthquakes and their effect on virtually every aspect of their lives. "The hospitality and service industries are a big employer of young people. Many of these businesses simply disappeared after the quakes and youth unemployment rates escalated. Schools shut down temporarily or relocated, family homes were damaged or mum or dad lost their job. Young people's natural peer and support networks were displaced as friends and family moved to other parts of the city or out of the region entirely. They lost contact with, and access to, the people and services they needed because of their reliance on public transport. That's a lot for anyone to cope with, let alone a young person that was already feeling under pressure."

Now, thanks to the efforts of Peter and long-time youth advocate, Dr Sue Bagshaw, Youth Hub Barbadoes enables a collection of agencies to deliver a range of services to young people from a single location and in doing so, has morphed from a service delivery venue into a working model for youth development.

Peter and Sue started Youth Hub Barbadoes with a blank sheet of paper - "we drew a young person in the centre of the page and then surrounded them with the services they might need" - and ended up creating not only the Youth Hub, but also a strategy for youth service delivery in Christchurch.

One idea has seeded another and now the number and scope of agencies wanting to be involved includes NGO's, the private/corporate sector, government agencies, education providers, volunteer groups and research organisations. The Vodafone foundation and the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal have also seen the value in the development and have contributed to building upgrades and funded a project manager to assist in the development.

"There's never really been a collective and cohesive strategy for government and NGOs around youth wellbeing. We have stated a desire to ensure the welfare of young people but there was no model to do this. We need to focus on improving the wellbeing indicators for youth which at present do not look good for New Zealand.

"So often you have all these agencies working around a young person, but how can you really tell if you're making a difference in the long term? We not only want to make a tangible difference to the lives of the city's youth, we also want to be able to measure and evaluate those differences. The Collaborative for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development Trust has recently completed initial interviews with managers and staff within the Youth Hub. In the longer term, the goal is to show measurable improvements in the indicators of well-being for youth.

www.youthhub.org.nz

NEW WEBSITE FOR YOUTH SERVICE

Youth Service is a new approach to working with young people. The goal of Youth Service is to help young people find

the best option for education, training or work-based learning that will help them build their skills and find a job.

www.youthservice.govt.nz

SUPERVISION DIRECTORY WEBSITE

If you're looking for a supervisor see supervisioninfo.org.nz. If you would like to be added to this website please email supervis@supervisioninfo.org.nz and we can either add or update your information. Please note the provision of this directory is a service only and we take no responsibility for checking credentials or information given. It is up to the individual using this information to ensure they have made the appropriate checks before engaging a supervisor.

www.supervisioninfo.org.nz

NEW WEBSITE FOR DISABILITY CHANGE

The website was launched early August, and is part of the Think Differently Campaign that aims to encourage and support a fundamental shift in attitudes and behaviour towards disabled people. It's about maximising opportunities and focusing on what people can do rather than what they can't.

www.thinkdifferently.org.nz

FREE RESOURCE FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Heaps of grandparents are raising their grandchildren, often because their own children are having difficulties. This toolbox is here to help. It comprises 6 sessions including info from grandparents who have 'been there', and other people who know stuff providing support and advice. It comprises three DVDs and a manual which you can work through at home on your own or with some friends. You can be part of a group or do it on your own.

www.theparentingplace.com

CREATE FOUNDATION

CREATE Foundation is Australia's peak organisation representing the voices of children and young people in out of home care. CREATE has been approached by a group in New Zealand called the Care Café to explore the possibility of setting up a similar organisation in New Zealand. The Care Café is a network for young people that have experienced the NZ care system.

We are still a long way off setting up any such organisation. If one were to be established it would need the buy-in of government, the sector, carers and, most importantly, children and young people. It would also need to be New Zealand run and New Zealand led.

CREATE does not pretend to have a comprehensive understanding of the New Zealand sector, the cultural environment, or the views of New Zealand's kids in care. What we do bring is our expertise and experience of setting up, growing and running a successful organisation which has helped to give a voice to young people and improve the care system in Australia.

The Care Cafe would be delighted if you a) signed the petition on CREATE Australia's website in support of the setting up of an organisation for kids in and ex care in New Zealand, b) let Mark Cusack at CREATE know by email Mark.Cusack@create.org.au that you would be interested in being kept informed of developments and/or in supporting this move in any way and c) checked out the NZ website: www.carecafe.co.nz

CHRISTCHURCH COMMUNITY ACCOUNTING (CCA)

Christchurch Community Accounting offer the following free services for small organisations:

- Help with set-up of financial systems for new organisations.
- Help tidying up existing financial systems if making problems.
- Mentor/train staff and volunteers to meet their accounting needs and handle the software/system they're using.
- Mentoring/training for GST and/or payroll accounting.
- Help creating financial statements at the end of the year.
- preparing documents/accounts for audit.

answering one-off questions.

- help with budgeting for the organisation.

Our charges are for:

- audits (small organisations up to \$200,000 turnover get priority): fee is 0.2% of the organisation's income for that year, or a minimum of \$50.
- courses/seminars for staff or members of the governing body.
- using us as an ongoing accounting service (larger organisations).

We've also come across some organisations that have lost financial documentation in the earthquake and needed help reconstructing their financial information. We're available to help with that, although most organisations would have resolved this by now one way or another.

We are using CPIT accounting students both as interns and as volunteers to help smaller organisations, and we have trained accountants for the more complex stuff.

To contact us, email cca.harald@gmail.com phone 384 2959 or 021 253 4835. Our office is at 901a Ferry Rd, Ferrymead.

NEW RESOURCES FROM IT'S NOT OK CAMPAIGN FOCUS ON PROTECTING CHILDREN

The posters, postcards and stickers focus on the role we all have to play in protecting children in our families and communities. Research shows that violence in the home affects children whether they see it, hear it or just know about it. Child abuse is most often linked to partner abuse. In 2010 70% of child abuse cases attended by Police were family violence related and half involved children being present.

All Black Liam Messam, Sports Broadcaster Jenny May Coffin and Comedian Ben Hurley feature on the new resources. The new resources can be ordered from 1 August by any person or organisation from the It's not OK website at: <http://www.areyouok.org.nz>

Also, don't forget to keep in touch with what's happening around the country at: www.facebook.com/ItsNotOK

COMMUNITY LAW MANUAL ONLINE EDITION

The Community Law Manual deals with many areas of community and personal life and provides answers and solutions to common legal questions, including: the New Zealand legal system, human rights, legal aid, consumer law, neighbour disputes, tenancy law, privacy law, employment law, legal issues for youth, health and disability law, ACC, family law, domestic violence, wills, enduring powers of attorney, harassment, criminal proceedings, police powers, court fines and more.

The printed manual is available directly from Wellington Community Law Centre: info@wclc.org.nz, and is available for free online:

www.communitylaw.org.nz

"THE MOST BASIC OF ALL HUMAN NEEDS IS THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND BE UNDERSTOOD. THE BEST WAY TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE IS TO LISTEN TO THEM."
RALPH NICHOLS



"EVERYBODY LAUGHS THE SAME IN EVERY LANGUAGE BECAUSE LAUGHTER IS A UNIVERSAL CONNECTION."
YAKOV SMIRNOFF
COMEDIAN, PAINTER, TEACHER

I'M BORED

UNDERSTANDING THE LAZY CHILD

WHEN CHILDREN SEEM LAZY AND UNMOTIVATED THEY MAY BE TRYING TO AVOID PAINFUL ISSUES

We are born curious – as anyone who has ever watched a baby will know. Even very young babies observe, push and pull their own world in an often furious attempt to learn about it. And well into their first year mothers will declare, with a mixture of pride and exhaustion, “Oh, he’s into everything now.” So in this sense, a lazy child is a contradiction in terms. And yet it is a relatively common experience for playworkers to have to cope with a child who seems unmotivated and disinterested.

Eleven year old Penny was just such a child. She was a rather plump girl, an only child, who had been attending after school club for nearly a year. Her playworkers had become increasingly irritated by her. “She just won’t make an effort,” said one. “She just seems bland about whatever we offer her.” Another volunteered “She never does more

than she necessary. If you ask her to help clear up she will, but she never just kicks in and helps. It’s the same with activities: if she didn’t chivvy her along she’d just sit there like a huge steam pudding.

Lazy children can make adults feel angry. They remind us of that indolent aspect of ourselves, which we would rather forget: the aspect of us that would just like to sit about and be waited upon. That is human! However, we do need to take the lazy child seriously. First and foremost, a tired child, lacking in vitality, needs to see a doctor. Lethargy in children is often a symptom of an underlying physical illness. When illness is ruled out, we need to understand children’s laziness as a communication. Let’s think about Penny.

LAZINESS AS A PROTEST

Penny’s playworkers were presuming from Penny’s demeanor that she was probably a somewhat doted on and indulged child. In fact, her arrival had been unplanned and interrupted her busy parents’ career plans.

Whilst there was no doubt they loved her, her mother admitted, “We decided from the word go that she would have to fit in with us, she wasn’t going to change our lives.” So Penny had always had a very strict routine which provided her with very few choices. As a small child she was compliant but as she reached later years of childhood she felt more and more constrained and restricted. Family life was lived at a pace and Penny soon began to realize non-compliance, i.e., laziness, gave her a sense of independence and freedom. “The more busy my mum is, the slower I get, and she can’t do anything about it,” She said laughingly. Of course, protests can become a way of living. Penny was using laziness in club as a way of warning the adults: “Don’t try and organize every minute for me.” She feared that if she responded enthusiastically to her playworkers they would take her over and, ironically, her laziness produced just the result. Irritated by her lack of effort, her playworkers would try to pressurize her into taking a more full part in club. They had to change their approach by offering her as much choice as possible and by also sometimes allowing her to be just lazy.

LAZINESS AS A WAY OF NOT FEELING

Eight year old Peter was always bored and tired at holiday club. He would arrive yawning, frowning and turning up his nose at whatever was on offer. “It’s boring,” he would say. His playworkers were concerned. “He just doesn’t seem to want to do anything . . . it’s not right in a boy of this age.” They decided to talk to his mother and find out what he was like at home. “He’s always been the same,” she said. “I’m afraid he’s just sullen.” Undeterred, Peter’s playworker pursued his history with his mother. She was soon able to pinpoint a change in Peter’s behaviour about a year after his father had left when he was five. He and his father had been close and initially his father had visited Peter regularly. Then he took a job further away and contact gradually ceased. Peter’s mother explained that Peter used to ask about his father a great deal “but he used to get so upset I suggested we didn’t talk about him any more”

In discussing Peter we wondered how he was coping now with his feelings about his

father. Not talking about feelings which upset us doesn't necessarily help us to stop experiencing them. We wondered if being bored was retreat for Peter in the sense that boredom is a feeling without feelings: just blandness and numbness.

The next time Peter said he was bored, his playworker asked him "If you weren't feeling bored now, what would you be feeling?" There was a pause before Peter's eyes filled with tears, "I'd be sad and mad... 'cos of my dad," he said.

Lazy children may actually be busily working hard! They are hard at work not to feel something painful and difficult which they feel they cannot share with the adults around them. It is always worth thinking of "laziness" as a cover for another feeling.

THE FEAR OF FINDING OUT

In spite of the difference in their ages, Penny and Peter shared a fear. Penny's playworkers were able to talk to her teachers and discovered her attainments were well behind both her chronological age and her ability. Her teachers also described her as lazy: "She's bright enough, she just won't do the work."

In order to learn, children need to feel free to be curious, to let their minds roam. If they feel there is a secret, something it would be bad to find out about, then they censor their curiosity. Peter didn't understand why his father had left and was afraid to find out in case, as he dreaded, it was his fault. Deep inside herself, Penny feared that she may not have been wanted by her parents. She knew instinctively they were resentful as well as delighted about her birth. She couldn't ask why and so was afraid to let her curiosity roam in case she made an unwelcome discovery. Such children may choose to struggle not to learn about much at all rather than risk learning about something which feels forbidden or painful.

SOMETIMES CHILDREN NEED TO BE LAZY

We have already thought about how parents today seem under real pressure to prove their successful parenting, and sometimes it



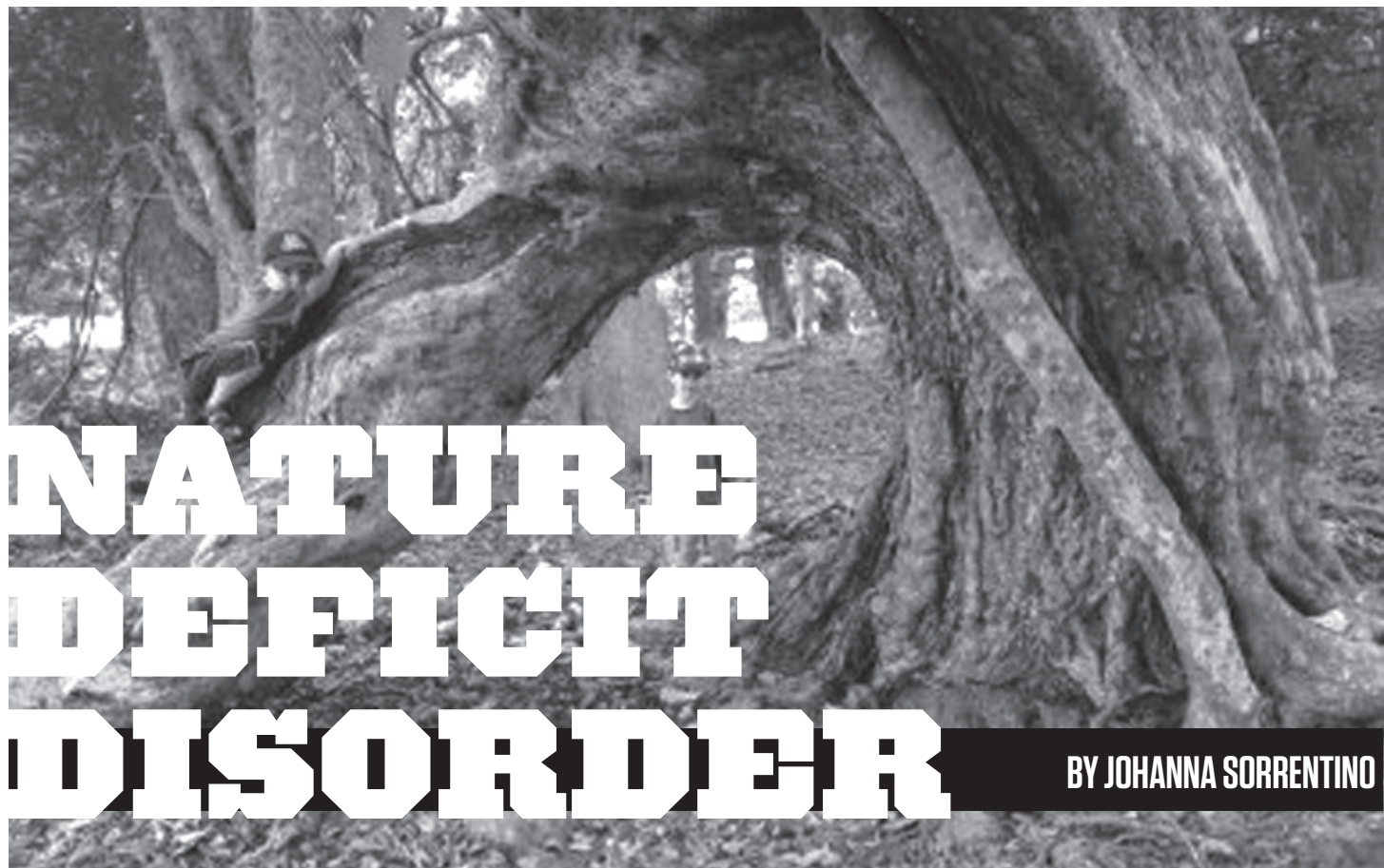
seems as though there is a mythical equation between the number of out-of-school activities a child takes on and the quality of their parenting! Very few children can now roam freely after school. Some simply watch television or videos/DVDs, but many from a very early age have a full diary of activities each evening. Whilst in many ways this may enhance both a child's development and education, the drawback is that relaxation is a serious and necessary business.

We need laziness to recover from the hurly-burly of daily life, and laziness is a natural process of recuperation and renewal. "Rolling all over the floor doing nothing" is an integral part of a child's development. And this is particularly important for older aged children, who may seem at times to do nothing but lie immobile on their beds for hours at a time conserving energy whilst listening to music so loud that the very foundations of the house seem to shake. At other times, there seems to be a suspicious silence emitting from the bedroom. But being a teenager is hard work and they may not in fact be "wasting time". They may not be meditating upon the finer points

of the great philosophical thinkers, but they are practicing being independent in many ways. Most important is their need to "feel whatever I want to feel," as one twelve year old described it, to have time and space to find meaning for their welter of new feelings and experiences (Clifford-Poston, 2005). And club, which provides teenagers with a crucial time to absorb and process life.

Finally, some children are more contemplative than others and we need to remember this when taking the lazy child seriously. Such children may need more time and space to process the hum of their curiosity. At this age, children's heads are buzzing with all sorts of thoughts and ideas which need to be processed and digested. So perhaps an important question for club workers to ask themselves is, "How much time are we setting aside for children to be lazy in club?"

From A playworkers guide to understanding Children's Behaviour Andrea Clifford-Poston (available from the OSCAR Networks Library)



How important is a walk in the woods to a child's development? It's one of the most burning education questions of the day, and, according to experts, a lack of routine contact with nature may result in stunted academic and developmental growth. This unwanted side-effect of the electronic age is called Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD).

The term was coined by author Richard Louv in his book *Last Child in the Woods* in order to explain how our societal disconnect with nature is affecting today's children. Louv says we have entered a new era of suburban sprawl that restricts outdoor play, in conjunction with a plugged-in culture that draws kids indoors. But, as Louv presents in his book, the agrarian, nature-oriented existence hard-wired into human brains isn't quite ready for the overstimulating environment we've carved out for ourselves. Some children adapt. Those who don't develop the symptoms of NDD, which include attention problems, obesity, anxiety, and depression.

While Nature Deficit Disorder isn't a clinical term, the concept has struck a chord with parents and educators. The child-nature reunion has emerged as a movement, and Louv says this is because the concept rings true for a generation of parents and grandparents who are reminded of their own joyous experiences in nature as children; whether it be summer camp, building a tree house, or, in Louv's case, helping turtles across the road during migration season. "People are so much on the treadmill. They need to be reminded that once upon a time childhood was different. People have prized and cherished memories of their time in nature, and it's disdainful for people to think that this has passed," he says.

Since 2005, when *Last Child in the Woods* hit the shelves, several studies have been published backing up the importance of the child-nature reunion. The American Institutes for Research conducted a study of the impact of a weeklong residential outdoor education program on at risk

youth. Students involved in the program experienced a 27 percent increase in their mastery of science concepts, better problem solving skills, enhanced self esteem, and improved behaviour in comparison with the control group stuck in the classroom.

The OSCAR Network has the book Last Child in the Woods in its library.

STUDY TO LOOK AT LINK BETWEEN EYESIGHT AND OUTDOOR PLAY

A researcher at Queensland's University of Technology has begun a three-year study into the relationship between outdoor play and the lower risk of nearsightedness. Previous research has shown outdoor play can reduce the chance of children becoming short sighted, but it's not clear whether it is exposure to light or physical activity which is the key.

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/health/8476967/ditch-the-ipad-and-send-kids-out-to-play>



ACTIVE PLAY AND ADHD



In recent years there has been more recognition of the health benefits and uses of play, from dealing with depression and obesity, to reducing ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).

A regimen of social rough and tumble play might help children with ADHD, which is characterised by an inability to concentrate on one task, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. It is the fastest-growing behavioural problem among young people, estimated to affect 8% of school-age children. Its rise has coincided with a reduction in outdoor spaces for play and recreation (*Panksepp 2003*).

Neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp believes that 'one reason for the increasing incidence of ADHD may be the diminishing availability of opportunities for pre-school children to engage in natural self-generated social play. The idea that intensive social play interventions, throughout early childhood, may alleviate ADHD symptoms remains to be evaluated. As an alternative to the use of play-reducing psycho stimulants, society could establish play "sanctuaries" for at-risk children in order to facilitate frontal lobe maturation and the healthy development of pro-social minds' (*Panksepp 2007*).

Recent research documents a reduction in disruptive behaviour after play (*O'Connor 2011, Pellegrini 1997*).

Mother-child play of maltreating and non-maltreating families was analysed when infants were 12 months old and again at two years old. Children from abusing families

engaged in less child-initiated play than did children from non-maltreating families, and they later demonstrated less socially competent behaviour (*Valentino 2011*).

Physical activity has important benefits for children's physical health and mental well-being, but many children do not meet recommended levels. Research suggests that active play has the potential to make a valuable contribution to children's overall physical activity, whilst providing additional cognitive, social and emotional benefits.

Yet international surveys find that children do not engage in the recommended levels of physically active play. A US survey of four to twelve year olds found low levels of active play (less than six times per week) and high levels of screen time (more than two hours per day). 37% had low levels of active play, and 65% had high screen time (*Anderson 2008*).

A qualitative study with 10-11 year old children was conducted in the UK by Brockman and colleagues (2011). Eleven focus groups were conducted with 77 children from four primary schools in Bristol. Focus groups examined factors that motivate children to take part in active play, and those that limit children's active play. Results: Children were motivated to engage in active play because they perceived it to be enjoyable, to prevent boredom, to have physical and mental health benefits and to provide freedom from adult control, rules and structure. However, children's active play was constrained by a number of

factors, including rainy weather and fear of groups of teenagers in their play spaces. Some features of the physical environment facilitated children's active play, including the presence of green spaces and cul-de-sacs in the neighbourhood.

Additionally, children's use of mobile phones when playing away from home was reported to help alleviate parents' safety fears, and therefore assist children's active play. Conclusions: Children express a range of motivational and environmental factors that constrain and facilitate their active play.

Preventing the decline in physical activity which occurs around 10-11 years of age is a public health priority. Physically active play can make unique contributions to children's development which cannot be obtained from more structured forms of physical activity.

Encouraging active play in children's leisure time has potential to increase physical activity levels while promoting optimal child development. Aspired wisdom states that contemporary British children no longer play outdoors, but systematic evidence for this is lacking.

The same eleven UK focus groups also examined children's perceptions of play, and the frequency and nature of their active play. The results demonstrate that children's perceptions of play were broad and included both physically active and sedentary behaviours. Children reported that they frequently engaged in active play (unfortunately, the researchers do not quantify how much active play children engage in) and valued both the physical and social benefits it provided. Whereas boys frequently reported having a 'kick about' or riding bikes as their preferred forms of active play, girls were less likely to report a specific activity. Additionally, boys reported greater independent mobility in their active play compared to girls. Finally, boys were more likely to report playing with neighbourhood friends but girls more frequently reported playing with family members. Brockman concludes that promoting active play in children's leisure time may increase the physical activity of children, but interventions may need to be tailored according to gender.

www.originalplay.com

THE DIRT ON DIRT

HOW GETTING DIRTY OUTDOORS BENEFITS KIDS

ALL THE FUSS ABOUT MESS. “DON’T TRACK MUD IN THE HOUSE!” “WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE DINNER!” “YOU CAN’T PLAY WITH THAT, YOU DON’T KNOW WHERE IT’S BEEN!”

Parents wear those phrases out like old blue jeans put through the spin cycle too many times. Many have come to see D-I-R-T as a four-letter word. Only two decades ago, kids made forts with sticks and mud, waded up to their knees in streams. How many do that now? Fears about dangers lurking in the muck (microbes, parasites and amoebas, oh my!) and a societal slant in favour of over sanitization keep families from letting kids do what comes naturally, which is to go outside and get a little messy.

Unfortunately, boys and girls today spend the better part of their time, seven hours per day on average (*Rideout, 2010*), indoors, in the sterile company of technology, rather than following their in-born impulses to explore the natural world with their senses. This indoor childhood is damaging to kids. In fact, in the last twenty years as kids spent less and less time outside, childhood obesity rates more than doubled (*CDC, 2008*), the United States became the largest consumer of ADHD medications in the world (*Sax, 2000*), 7.6 million U.S. children are vitamin D deficient (*Kumar, 2000*), and the use of antidepressants in paediatric patients rose sharply (*Delate, 2004*).

When kids do leave the house, a growing body of research suggests the exact things we do in the name of protecting them from dirt and germs, such as not letting them get too messy and frequently using hand sanitizers and antibacterial products, can inhibit their mental and physical health and resilience.

FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

Children who don’t spend time outside run the risk of serious health issues, such as obesity (*CDC, 2008*), myopia (*Reuters, 2009*), and vitamin D deficiency (*AAP, 2009*). The good news is that outdoor

activities kids love, like running, jumping, climbing, playing games with friends, and taking nature walks are a great strategy for keeping children healthy.

In addition, experts say, if we dig a little deeper - literally - there are even more benefits to be found. Playing in the dirt and even ingesting a little along the way, some researchers say, helps children build stronger immune systems. The Hygiene Hypothesis, first put forth in the 1980s, holds that when children are too clean and their exposure to parasites, bacteria, and viruses is limited early in life, they face a greater chance of having allergies, asthma, (*Yazdanbakhsh, 2002*) and other autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis and type-one diabetes during adulthood (*Platts-Mills, 2005*).

While no one disputes the wisdom of basic, commonsense sanitation measures, such as washing hands and using hand sanitizer when soap and water aren’t available, experts say some exposure to dirt and germs does not hurt children, and may very well help. Dirt, says a Northwestern University study, is good for children’s cardiovascular health. Analyzing data collected from thousands of children over two decades, researchers have concluded that when children are exposed to germs and pathogens during infancy their risk of cardiovascular inflammation in adulthood, a precursor to heart attacks and strokes, is reduced.

According to a four-year study that examined approximately two million children under the age of 18, antidepressant use is on the rise in kids, with the fastest growing segment found to be preschool children aged 0-5 years (*Delate, 2004*).

While not a substitute for medication, an increasing number of experts are



recognizing the role of nature in enhancing kids’ mental health. It’s easy to see the effect when you watch children play outside. Kids are different when they’re outdoors; free of school pressures and harried schedules, they relax and simply become kids. In fact, according to one study, children’s stress levels fall within minutes of seeing green spaces, making outside play a simple, no-cost, and time efficient antidote for an overstressed child (*Kuo, 2004*).

Studies now also show that going beyond seeing green spaces to touching them has a powerful and positive effect. Making direct contact with soil, whether through gardening, digging for worms, or making mud pies has been shown to improve mood, reduce anxiety, and facilitate learning.

In a study by Bristol University, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, or *M. vaccae*, a “friendly” bacteria found in soil, was shown to activate a group of neurons that produce the brain chemical serotonin,

enhancing feelings of well-being, much in the same manner as antidepressant drugs and exercise. Interest in the study arose when patients treated with *M. vaccae* for another health issue reported increases in their quality of life (Lowry, 2007).

GOOD CLEAN (DIRTY) FUN BE A BUILDER

- Your children can make buildings of all shapes and sizes if they use sticks to create a frame and pack mud on to it. Houses or forts perhaps, a castle with a moat, a stable to put toy horses in.
- If they also like the idea of large-scale public works, have them make a river by digging a trench in the mud or dirt. Then, add water as needed. Most importantly, build a dam to protect the town!

BE AN ARTIST

- Give your child a stick and a muddy surface to draw on. Mistakes are no problem; mud is a very forgiving medium. Just smooth them over and start again!
- Mud prints are fun too. Your child's muddy hands and/or feet can stamp cool patterns onto a sheet of paper. If you prefer to keep it simple, the sidewalk is another canvas.
- And then there's sculpture. Mud balls can become out-of-season snowmen or abstract sculptures. If your child's creation isn't sticking together, just add more water.

BE A CHEF

- If you're going to play in the mud, why not make some mud pies? If you have some old cake or pie tins, great. Otherwise, shallow plastic containers work just fine. Once the pies are "baked," it's time to make them beautiful! Encourage your children to scour the yard for pebbles, petals, and leaves that will make perfect decorations on top.
- Collect dirt, grass, leaves, twigs, and acorns in a large container, and you have a bountiful nature salad. Add some water, and it's mud stew! (Remind small children to play with their dirt food, not eat it!).

For more wonderful outdoor activities visit:
www.BeOutThere.org/ActivityFinder

Adapted from:

*THE DIRT ON DIRT—How Getting Dirty
Outdoors Benefits Kids—National Wildlife
Federation*

http://www.nwf.org/~media/PDFs/Be%20Out%20There/Dirt_Report_2012.ashx

MODELLING THE WAY FOR CHILDREN THROUGH ADULT BEHAVIOUR

*The philosopher, essayist and
poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson
once said, "What you do
speaks so loudly, I can't hear
what you are saying."*

This has profound meaning for parents since children carefully look for cues regarding adult behavior, paying greater attention to what adults do than to what adults say. In fact, adult behavior remains one of the most powerful skills parents have in influencing their children. However, children become easily confused when adults verbally express one value and physically model another.

**"I STILL FIND EACH DAY TOO SHORT
FOR ALL THE THOUGHTS I WANT TO
THINK, ALL THE WALKS I WANT TO
TAKE, ALL THE BOOKS I WANT TO
READ AND ALL THE FRIENDS I WANT
TO SEE."**

JOHN BURROUGHS, NATURALIST



For example:

- We want our children to remain calm and composed in the face of frustration or disappointments but don't always handle our own frustrations and disappointments well. What did you look like and sound like the last time you were running late due to an unanticipated traffic jam?
- We encourage our children to use both calm voices and appropriate words when they are upset, but what do our voices and words sound like when we are under duress? What words and tone did you use when you were accidentally rear ended?
- We frequently ask our children to stop crying when they can't find their favourite toy, but how do we act when we've misplaced something that is important to us. What behaviours did you display when you were frantically looking around the house for your misplaced car keys?

As parents it is important to remember the following:

- The adult behaviour we exhibit reflects what we value.
- Desired behaviour does not result when we model one action and expect a different one from our child.
- Congruency occurs when children observe parental words that are consistent with their actions.
- How adults express and manage their own feelings serves as a model that is remembered by children throughout their lifetime.
- Children continually learn from adults, regardless if the adults intention is to teach.
- One of the greatest influences parents have on children is the example they set as role models.

by Joan Morgenstern

FLOW: BEING HAPPY AND BEING IN CONTROL

‘GIVEN THAT WE ARE WHO WE ARE, WITH WHATEVER HANG-UPS AND REPRESSIONS, WHAT CAN WE DO TO IMPROVE OUR FUTURE?’

MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, 2002

It may seem a contradiction to say we need to be in control in order to experience happiness or ‘flow’. However, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Professor of Psychology and Management and Director of the Quality of Life Research Center in the Drucker School at Claremont Graduate University, asserts that an individual experiences happiness when she or he takes control over her or his thoughts and feelings, and therefore orders their ‘consciousness’. Csikszentmihalyi acknowledges that control takes ‘determination and discipline’ but maintains that ‘being in control of the mind means that literally anything that happens can become a source of joy’.

THE MODEL OF ‘FLOW’

1. The individual sets clear goals. Developing the goals means dedication, and actions are reliable and controlled.
2. The individual becomes immersed in the activity. Attention is invested in the task. Concentration matches actions with the opportunities of the actions – a balance of challenge and achievement.
3. The individual pays attention to what happens. There is the ability to sustain involvement because ‘psychic energy’ is invested and self-consciousness is reduced.
4. The individual learns to enjoy the immediate experience. The control of the mind enables an individual to enjoy life even when circumstances are difficult – a sense of ‘inner harmony’.

RESEARCH ON FLOW

In his celebrated text, *Flow: The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness*, Csikszentmihalyi reported on his extensive research into happiness or ‘optimal experience’. Exercises were conducted with thousands of people with differing skills who lived in different countries. They were asked to record descriptions of what activities or tasks they enjoyed. In a range of contexts, they described similar states of

enjoyment - among them, playing chess, climbing mountains, undertaking workplace tasks, reading books and writing creatively. The descriptions of ‘flow’ were similar for young and old, women and men, people from different socio-economic backgrounds, and individuals from Italian, Japanese and American contexts. Unequivocally, the subjects described an experience of taking control over their thought processes and their consciousness in which they felt ‘a sense of mastery ... in determining the content of life...’ (Csikszentmihalyi, p4). Interestingly, the experience of flow is not related to either external reward or punishment but... located within an individual’s internal processes of thinking and feeling.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FLOW

The concept of flow - of people being so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter - is similar to happiness as described by Seligman. For an individual to experience flow, she or he has to have:

1. complete concentrated involvement in the task
2. a sense of ecstasy - of being outside everyday reality
3. great inner clarity - knowledge of what needs to be done, and how well she or he is doing it
4. knowledge that the activity is doable - that her/his skills are adequate to the task
5. a sense of serenity - no self-consciousness and a feeling of growing beyond the boundaries of the ego
6. a feeling of timelessness - of being so thoroughly focused on the present that hours seem to pass by in minutes
7. intrinsic motivation - where whatever produces the experience of flow becomes its own reward.

THE ‘HOW TO’ OF FLOW

The idea of flow is about exercising control over circumstances that produce a positive experience. In the flow model, the

activity becomes an end in itself because an individual concentrates psychic energy which is invested in the enjoyable experience. The capacity for happiness is available to us all, and there are practices that will assist us to develop this facility.

Csikszentmihalyi has proved that happiness is a measurable state, and that it is possible for us to increase our level of wellbeing. We can take steps in our daily lives to ensure that we maintain a level of wellbeing and positive emotion through the practice of setting goals for, and developing consciousness of, our actions, thoughts and feelings. We can develop awareness of our desires and work with purpose to achieve them through making our feelings, thoughts and actions congruent. This practice produces a state of ‘inner harmony’, ‘flow’ or happiness.

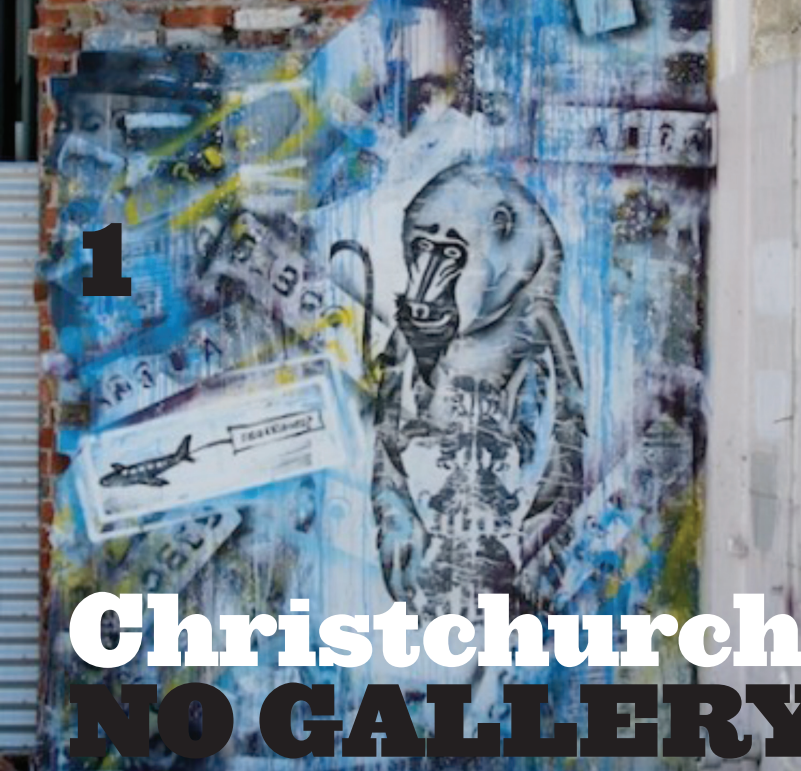
FLOW IN WORK AND LEISURE

In an earlier text about flow, Csikszentmihalyi referred to the danger of splitting life into a binary positioning of work versus leisure time and seeing each of them as discrete activities that could be meaningless. The case for work being meaningless might be put because it is seen to be ‘unfree’ and leisure can be seen as meaningless because it has ‘no purpose’. Understanding the experience of flow can provide awareness that our working lives and leisure time do not have to be divisible because in flow, work... becomes as enjoyable as leisure. In our working lives, we could reflect on what we might want to develop in ourselves that will ‘order our consciousness’ so that we might experience flow which we could also take into our leisure activities.

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- Csikszentmihalyi, M., *Talk on Creativity Fulfilment and Flow*, an 18.5 minute video. Viewed on 28 April 2009 at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXIeFJCqsPs>

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Christchurch: NO GALLERY REQUIRED

Christchurch post-quakes is a dizzying, eclectic landscape of artistic outpourings to an environment that often seems out of our control – something that might seem even more so when we watch a city being reconstructed – there are all these forums asking what people want the city to look like, but street art allows people to contribute immediately. **HAPPYZINE.CO.NZ**

The artworks used for this piece are as follows:

1. 'Are you a baboon' by Tess Sheerin, photo by Mike Densen. www.tesssheerin.com
2. Embassy Wall, by FREAK (Wongi Wilson), IKARUS and YIKES, photo by Reuben Woods. www.wongi.co.nz
3. Giraffe, Unknown artist, photo by Reuben Woods

4. GreeNZone by Jason Kelly, photo by artist. www.jasonkellydesign.co.nz

5. Homage To The Lost Spaces (Government Life Building Studio Series) by Mike Hewson, photo by Reuben Woods. www.mikehewson.co.nz

6. Unknown artist, photo by Reuben Woods

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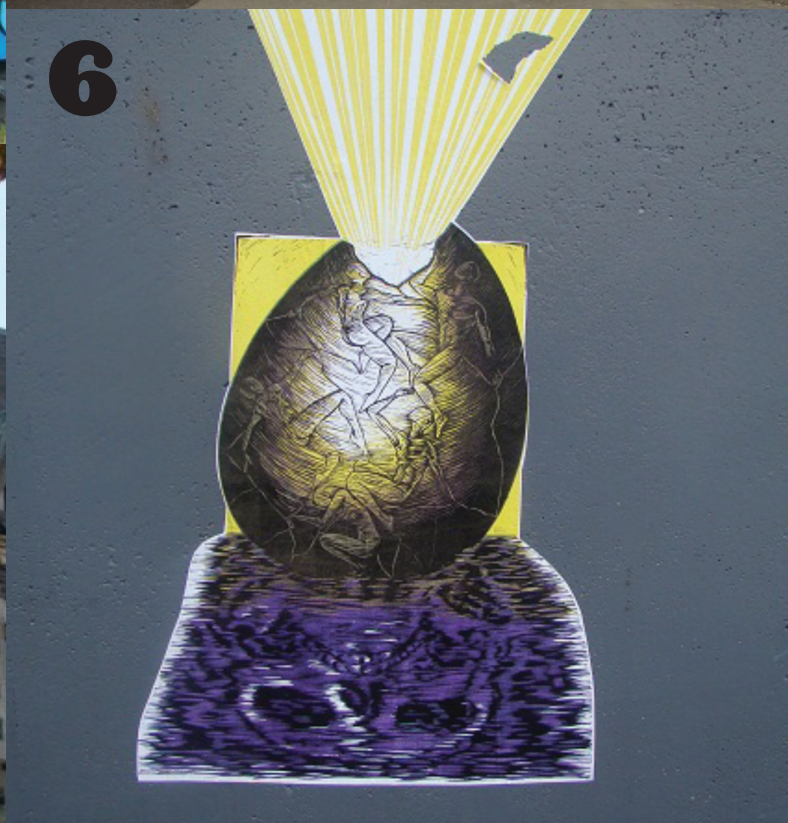
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OSCAR NETWORK TRAINING AND EVENT CALENDAR TERM 4 2012

| EVENT | BRIEF RUN-DOWN | DATE | TIME & PLACE | COST (GST EXCLUSIVE) |
|--------------------|--|------------------------------|--|---|
| Training Day | Suitable for all Staff and Management • Christmas Craft • A-Z of OSCAR Management | Saturday 27th October | 9.15am – 12.30pm Waltham School Hall Cnr Vienna & Hastings St East, Waltham | \$30 members \$75 non-members |
| Otago Training | Suitable for all Staff and Management Morning • Child Development 1 Setting the Behaviour framework Afternoon • A-Z of OSCAR Management | Saturday 3rd November | 9.15am – 3.15pm Alhambra Oaks Motor Lodge Conference Room 588 Great King Street, Dunedin | \$30 each session \$50 for both Limited to 20 Lunch provided |
| Core Training | • Code of Ethics | Tuesday 6th November | 10am – 12.30pm OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street, Addington | \$30 staff members \$75 non-members Limited to 12 |
| Tasman Training | Suitable for all Staff and Management Morning • Child Development 1 Setting the Behaviour framework Afternoon • A-Z of OSCAR Management | Saturday 10th November | 9.15am – 3.15pm Sport Tasman Board Room Sports House 142 Saxton East Road, Stoke | \$30 each session \$50 for both Limited to 20 Lunch provided |
| Southland Training | Suitable for all Staff and Management Morning • Child Development 1 Setting the Behaviour framework Afternoon • A-Z of OSCAR Management | Saturday 24th November | 9am – 2.30pm Kelvin Hotel Esk Room 16 Kelvin Street, Invercargill | \$30 each session \$50 for both Limited to 15 Lunch provided |
| Cluster Combined | Suitable for all Staff and Management | Tuesday 4th December | 10am – 12 noon To be advised | Free |

Treasure Trove Trust will close on Friday 14th December and reopen on Friday 8 February 2013

The OSCAR Network will close on Wednesday 19 December and reopen on Monday 14th January 2013

Creative Junk will close @ 3.00pm on Friday 21 December and reopen on Wednesday 23 January 2013