

# SNOOP



OSCAR Network  
Christchurch

SUPPORTING THE NETWORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES  
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TEACHING "DIVERSITY":  
A PLACE TO BEGIN  
NOT IN MY GANG  
WHY AUTISTIC KIDS  
MAKE EASY TARGETS FOR  
SCHOOL BULLIES  
CHILDREN WITH  
DISABILITIES 'SOMETIMES  
INVISIBLE'  
FREE PLAY TRUMPS PAID  
CHARTER FOR  
CHILDREN'S PLAY



ENHANCING CHILDREN'S PLAY : WHAKAREWA / TE TAAKARO TAMARIKI







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

## 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

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# TOP 8 GIFTS FOR PLAYFUL CHILDREN

In this day and age, there are a million and one gadgets to keep your kids entertained indoors. Most of them require batteries. And most of them will put a substantial dent in your wallet. During these lean economic times, it's time to rewind. Here are some holiday gift ideas -- all for less than 25 bucks -- that come with no operating instructions. That's because your kids must use their imaginations to figure out how to play with them.

## WARNING:

These toys require your children to venture outside. The outdoors presents many hazards, including the temptation to run and possibly fall down; potential interactions with neighbours; lack of temperature control; and stain-causing substances like dirt, mud, and grass.

## SAUCER

With this plastic disc, your kids can work gravity to their advantage and then put some colour in their cheeks as they trudge uphill in anticipation of future thrills.

## JUMP ROPE

Now used more commonly by adult fitness buffs, the jump rope offers children hours of entertainment and exertion, not to mention a chance to hone their singing skills. Hazards include endless repetition of jump rope jingles around the dinner table.

## BOUNCY BALL

Whether it's a small "Spaldeen" or a big rubber ball, bouncy balls can be thrown, kicked, hit with a stick, and, yes, bounced. Children can use them to play classic games or to devise their own. Warning: Bouncy balls must be kept under strict supervision at all times. If left unattended, they may slip into gutters, dart out into traffic, or fly through neighbours' windows.

## SIDEWALK CHALK

Bring out your child's inner artist and beautify your neighbourhood with this array of coloured chalk. Chalk may also be used to draw those old-fashioned games

like hopscotch, four-square, and Tic Tac Toe. Warning: Sidewalk chalk is best used on the sidewalk, which as you may know, is commonly located next to a street.

## FRISBEE

This flying saucer is arguably more popular on college campuses than on playgrounds, but the earlier your child starts honing her skills, the better chance she stands of becoming the next Ultimate Frisbee champion. Hazards of tossing a Frisbee include interception by neighbourhood dogs.

## KITE

Even before Mary Poppins, the prospect of kite-flying has prompted children and parents alike to break out into song. Windy fields beckon these feisty flyers, who relish soaring, swooping, and snarling themselves in trees. Warning: Particularly spirited kites have been known to fight with one another, leading to kite flying bans in some public parks.

## HULA HOOP

Mastering the delicate art of hula hooping gives your children a chance to show off at birthday parties, picnics, and family celebrations. For the less co-ordinated among us, thrills can still be found in rolling, twirling, and jumping through these plastic circles of fun.

## STICK

Despite our advances in toy technology, it is debatable whether anything can surpass the stick. Available in all shapes and sizes, the stick magically transforms into a sword, wand, baseball bat, dog toy, cane, or even a light saber. Best of all, should it break, Mother Nature will replace it for free.

## BONUS: CARDBOARD BOX

Wrap all your gifts in big boxes and your children will delight in climbing inside them, crawling under them, and fashioning their own magical kingdoms. Warning: Children may enjoy the boxes more than your gifts.

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# Teaching “Diversity”: A Place to Begin

By Janet Gonzalez-Mena, Dora Pulido-Tobiasen

Building positive identities and a respect for differences means weaving diversity into the fabric of children’s everyday lives. Working with families is an important first step in helping children accept, understand, and value their rich and varied world.

## Talking About Differences

Here are some ways to promote effective communication.

1. Be available. Try to talk to parents as often as possible. Also, remember that body language can reveal whether you are anxious or in a hurry. If you are calm and relaxed, a family will feel that they can be open with you.
2. Be informative. As you know, families appreciate knowing what goes on during the day. Keep a few notes and don’t always focus on problems.
3. Be receptive. Help parents feel comfortable talking to you by setting aside your judgments. Strive to listen beyond their words to uncover unspoken messages.
4. Figure out problems together. If a parent is unhappy, try to get the root of the problem. Are issues based on cultural differences, or could it be something else?
5. Don’t assume. Some parents will never raise an issue or disagree with a person they consider to be an authority. It is our responsibility to open up possibilities for parents to talk to us about their opinions and reasons for how they choose to care for their child.

We all want children to grow up in a world free from bias and discrimination, to reach for their dreams and feel that whatever they want to accomplish in life is possible. We want them to feel loved and included and never to experience the pain of rejection or exclusion. But the reality is that we do live in a world in which racism and other forms of bias continue to affect us. Discrimination hurts and leaves scars that can last a lifetime, affecting goals, ambitions, life choices, and feelings of self-worth.

How can we best prepare children to meet

the challenges and reap the benefits of the increasingly diverse world they will inherit? We can raise children to celebrate and value diversity and to be proud of themselves and their family traditions. We can teach children to respect and value people regardless of the color of their skin, their physical abilities, or the language they speak.

## How to Begin

As our nation grows increasingly diverse, there has never been a better opportunity for us to learn to live respectfully together and benefit from one another’s wisdom and experiences. But sometimes fear, uncertainty, or discomfort prevent people from talking to each other. This is especially true when it comes to the topics of race and racism, cultural differences, language and bilingualism, and the myriad questions that arise in a world where these issues have such a powerful place in children’s lives. As professionals who partner with families to nurture children, parents often regard us as a resource on a wide range of issues connected to diversity. We are in a unique position to engage in conversations that ask us to consider important questions such as:

- What does it mean to be a parent raising a child in this diverse world?
- What does it mean to be a young child growing up in this diverse world?

## Addressing Diversity

Almost every aspect of child-rearing is influenced by cultural beliefs and values. Over time, children learn who they are and what to do through these experiences — absorbing a sense of their routines, traditions, languages, cultures, and national or racial identities.

There are many equally valid ways to raise healthy children who thrive in the world. Professional knowledge and experience are important, but we must never forget how much we can learn from the families we work with.

## Developing Cultural Sensitivity

Even within a particular ethnic group, diverse care-giving practices may abound. Without specific cultural information, we can inadvertently use practices and approaches that counter parents’ efforts. For example, many of us who work with families believe that building self-esteem involves praising children and avoiding negative remarks that undermine their sense of worth.

To us, such a remark may be upsetting, but a mother from a different culture may have very different notions about what her son needs. She may believe that praising children leads to pride and that pride gets in the way of humility, which is an important character trait for her son to develop. Her goal may be to help her son learn to put others before himself, a common value in cultures more oriented toward the group than the individual. When parents’ practices differ from our professional beliefs, some of us may try to change behaviours without understanding that these parents’ motives may be different from but no less valid than our own. To prevent this, we must become skilled at talking with parents about differences.

## Getting to Know Families

One of our first objectives as professionals is to find out how a family’s practices relate to their goals for their children. Granted, if the children you work with come from a variety of cultures, the task may seem overwhelming. But just as you get to know each child and her needs, you can also get to know individual families and understand their needs and cultural priorities. As you work in partnership with families, keep in mind that many parents are eager to explain the connections between what they do and their cultural beliefs. Other parents may not have articulated these thoughts before or do not realize that differences exist.

If you perceive a difference in child-rearing practices, the best approach is to ask parents about that difference while being careful not to appear critical. You may want to observe how parents interact with their children, thinking of yourself as a learner rather than an expert. By staying open-minded, you may emerge with valuable insights into specific child-rearing practices.

As we strive to be culturally sensitive to families, we are faced with this question: Is it important for children to receive “culturally consistent” care from all the adults who are concerned with their well-being?

Inevitably, situations arise when we strongly disagree with a family’s practice even after we understand its roots. When this happens, it’s important to keep in mind that different ways of doing things aren’t necessarily bad or harmful in and of themselves. Children are resilient, as all of us who work with them know. They adapt and thrive and are

able to appreciate that care, comfort, and love come in different forms, in different contexts, and from different people. But if the differences are not met with acceptance, respect, and understanding by the adults involved, it can lead to difficulties and misunderstandings. According to Carol Brunson Phillips, executive director of the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, culturally sensitive care can make a difference as to whether or not a child is able to remain firmly rooted in her own culture and become a part of other cultures as well; that is, to become truly bicultural. If the right balance isn't found, a child may feel forced to choose one culture and give up the other-- or flounder between cultures without a sense of belonging.

Some children may have a difficult time developing a sense of who they are and where they belong when our interactions are quite different from those of their parents and family. Others adapt more easily. It's always important to consider the parents' goals as well as the child's personality and to adjust our decisions by observing how the child responds. Upon careful exploration, if we believe that a particular practice is harmful to a child, it's important to help parents understand the implications.

But most situations do not approach the point where a child is in danger. Probably the most important element in bridging children's worlds is for the adults who care for them to feel comfortable and accepting of their differences. When adults are uncomfortable, afraid, or judgmental, they can't be supportive of children. That's why open, respectful dialogue about cultural practices is essential. At the same time, we must be careful not to give messages, either spoken or unspoken, that what we think is superior to their home culture. Otherwise, children may develop a negative view of themselves and their families.

### Learning to Appreciate Differences

Because young children form ideas about themselves and other people long before they start kindergarten, it is important to begin teaching anti-bias lessons early. If we reinforce these lessons, children will learn to appreciate, rather than fear, differences and to recognize bias and stereotypes when they see them. Children learn early on — from television, books, magazines, photographs, and, of course, interactions—how others

view people like themselves. Uncomfortable reactions can alert children to the negative significance some people put on differences. In other words, the differences in eye or skin colour can simply become a category of human variation — or those differences can take on a particular negative significance.

If what children do at home is never mentioned or, worse, is considered strange by other children and adults, children may refuse to speak their home language, eat certain foods, wear certain clothes, follow certain religious practices. As some children begin to compare their appearance or life with others, they may start expressing their concerns about being different. We know that children need to be reassured that differences are fine. More than that, we need to work with parents to help bridge the norms, the attitudes, and the ways of doing things in children's cross-cultural worlds — and to counteract any demeaning and harmful messages.

The following suggestions are designed to help you teach children to not only value diversity but also to resist prejudice and discrimination.

- *Teach children to be critical thinkers, specifically about prejudice and discrimination. Critical thinking is when we strive to understand issues through examining and questioning. Young children can begin to develop these skills, to know when a word or an image is unfair or hurtful.*
- *Respond to children's questions and comments about differences even if you're not sure what to say. Children often interpret a lack of response to mean that it's not acceptable to talk about differences. If you're unsure about what to say, try: "I need to think about your question and talk to you later." Or, you can always go back to a child and say: "Yesterday you asked me a question about... Let's talk about it." Another useful response: "I don't really like what I told you this morning I've given it some more thought, and here's what I really should have said."*
- *Listen carefully to what children are saying. Ask a few questions before answering to get a clearer idea of what they really want to know and the ideas they already have on the subject.*
- *Shape your response to the child's age and personality. Generally, children want to know why people are different, what this means, and how those differences relate to them. Remember that children's questions and comments are a way for them to gather information about aspects of their identity and usually do not stem from bias or prejudice.*
- *Share with families and colleagues ideas for responding to children's questions. You'll gain new*

*ideas and insights as you exchange experiences, and you can clarify what works best for you and your children.*

- *Model the behaviours and attitudes you want children to develop. Pay particular attention to situations that can either promote prejudice or inhibit a child's openness to diversity. Make sure your program reflects diversity in books, magazines, dolls, puzzles, paintings, music, and so on.*
- *Don't let racist and prejudicial remarks go by without intervening. It's important to let children know from a very early age that name-calling of any kind, whether it's about someone's religion, race, ethnic background, or sexual orientation, is hurtful and wrong.*
- *Try to create opportunities for children to interact and make friends with people who are different from them. As you know, children learn best from concrete experiences.*
- *Involve families in sharing their traditions. In fact, instead of deciding yourself which tradition you would like to expose children to, ask families what they would like to share.*
- *Try to expose children to role models from their own culture as well as to those from other cultures. Remember: seeing adults developing positive relationships with people who are different offers an important model and teaches children to value such relationships.*

As professionals who work with families, our willingness to talk openly about identity and to help foster a positive sense of self in children can make an enormous difference in affirming the rich diversity of our human community and helping children make bridges across cultures and traditions. Some people fear that by affirming children's identities in terms of home cultures and traditions, we may be promoting separatism. That is not the case. The more that children have a solid grounding and understanding about who they are and where they came from, the more they learn to move with grace and confidence among communities different from their own, and the closer we get to building a world of respect, curiosity, sharing, and humanity.

*Adapted from A Place to Begin: Working With Parents on Issues of Diversity, by Dora Pulido-Tobiasen and Janet Gonzalez-Mena, reprinted with permission from California Tomorrow. A Place to Begin: Working With Parents on Issues of Diversity*

*This article originally appeared in the November, 1999 issue of Early Childhood Today.*

# NO IN MY GANG

## CHILDREN'S AND TEENAGERS' REASONS FOR EXCLUDING OTHERS

It's a fact of life that when kids form friendship groups some would-be members get left out. Research has focused on what it's like to be rejected. But now a new study has taken a more unusual approach, asking children and adolescents to recall times that they left someone out, and to explain their reasons for doing so. Holly Recchia and her team hope the findings could help design better interventions for reducing social exclusion.

Eighty-four children were interviewed: 28 7-year-olds, 28 11-year-olds and 28 17-year-olds. A clear difference emerged with age. The younger children rarely described themselves as having any choice when they'd excluded others. They mostly mentioned practical reasons - "We were playing piggy-back wars ... another kid wanted to play ... we didn't have any more people for him," or peer pressure - "We were playing jump roping and somebody else wanted to play with us, but then my friend said no." Their pleas of innocence contradict behavioural observations showing that young children often leave other kids out deliberately. The 17-year-olds, by contrast, were more up-

front, most often giving the reason that they disliked the excluded person - "We didn't invite this one girl because she's not open-minded..." was a typical comment.

Based on the finding with the younger kids, Recchia and her team said that social inclusion programmes for youngsters may benefit from encouraging them to take ownership over their actions, "given their apparent reluctance or incapacity to do so spontaneously."

On a positive note, when asked to evaluate their reasons for excluding others, even the younger participants showed evidence that they were conscious of the ramifications (for example, the rejected person might not want to be friends with them in the future). It was also clear that the participants sometimes deliberately avoided thinking too much about what they'd done - a strategy that the researchers said "was aimed at numbing their awareness of the emotional consequences of leaving others out." Consistent with this, some of the participants mentioned feeling guilty when they gave in to peer pressure and took part in the exclusion of others.

Even among the 17-year-olds, who mostly treated disliking another person as a valid reason for excluding them, there

was evidence that they were aware of the "undesirability" of exclusion. Recchia's team said this was "heartening" and could provide "an initial entree for interventions aimed at helping widely disliked victims of exclusion become reintegrated."

This is the first study to investigate the subjective experience of excluding others across a wide age range of children and teens. The researchers said a "one-size-fits-all" model fails to capture the complexity of their results. "We argue that research on social exclusion could benefit from a fuller recognition of this variability and complexity in young people's subjective construals of their own experiences," they concluded, "thus setting the stage for programmes that may help young people to more critically and deliberately weigh their multiple and varying goals and concerns."

*HE Recchia, BA Brehl, and C Wainryb (2012). Children's and adolescents' reasons for socially excluding others. Cognitive Development, 195-203 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2012.02.005>*

*Author weblink: [http://crdh.concordia.ca/researchers/Holly\\_Recchia.html](http://crdh.concordia.ca/researchers/Holly_Recchia.html)*

*\*Visit the DIGEST BLOG: <http://www.researchdigest.org.uk/blog> to comment on this research, search past items and discover more links.*

*In the A-level syllabus: AQA spec B, A2, social development, popularity and rejection. OCR, A2, psychology and education. Edexcel, A2, psychology of education.*

*Rottman J, and Kelemen D (2012). Aliens behaving badly: Children's acquisition of novel purity-based morals. Cognition, 124 (3), 356-60 PMID: 22743053*

# CHILDREN'S REASONING ABOUT WHEN IT'S OKAY TO REJECT THEIR PEERS

The playground sight of a group of friends rejecting a lone child betrays an ugly side of human nature. An intriguing new cross-cultural study has examined the development of reasoning about social rejection in young children and teenagers, revealing a surprising level of sophistication.

Yoonjung Park and Melanie Killen found that by age ten, children in the USA and South Korea already consider rejecting a peer based on their nationality or gender to be morally worse than peer rejection based on the behavioural traits of aggressiveness or shyness. The children seem to recognise that people can be expected, to a certain extent, to modify their behaviour, but are unable (and shouldn't be expected) to alter their gender or nationality. The researchers presented 397 Korean children and 333 US children, aged 10 to 13, with fictional scenarios involving peer rejection and victimisation in different contexts (group rejection and one-on-one friendship rejection) and for different reasons (for their shy or aggressive behaviour, their nationality or their gender). The children were asked to say how acceptable each form of rejection was and to justify their answers.

The results were consistent with 'social domain theory' because the reasons the children gave depended on the context. The children tended to cite moral reasons (e.g. 'he may get hurt in his mind') when explaining their condemnation of peer rejection based on nationality and gender. By contrast, rejection based on behavioural traits (shyness or aggressiveness) was justified or condemned based on grounds of social-convention and personal choice. For example, one of the children answered that 'if he [the fictional child doing the rejecting] doesn't want to be friends with the kid, it's okay. It's his choice'; others referred to the disruption likely to be caused by an aggressive person entering the group. Overall, the older children actually perceived peer rejection as more acceptable than the younger children, perhaps because children come to value autonomy and personal

choice more as they get older. However, this increased acceptance was not true across all contexts. For example, rejection because of nationality was seen as less acceptable by older children. There were few cultural differences. The exceptions were that the US kids were more willing to accept rejection of aggressive peers, perhaps because aggression is more rife in US society. The Korean kids, meanwhile, were more tolerant of rejection based on nationality. This might reflect the fact that the Seoul-based Korean sample were ethnically homogenous whereas the

Washington DC-based US sample were more ethnically diverse.

Park and Killen called on future research to explore children's reasoning about peer rejection in other cultures and to involve different contexts and reasons for rejection. 'Drawing on findings regarding children's social understanding, evaluation, and reasoning about peer rejection to design programmes to ameliorate the negative long-term consequences of peer rejection will go a long way towards reducing the social deviance and facilitating social tolerance and inclusion in multiple contexts and across cultures,' they said.

*Park, Y., and Killen, M. (2010).*

*When is peer rejection justifiable? Children's understanding across two cultures. Cognitive Development, 25 (3), 290-301 DOI:10.1016/j.cogdev.2009.10.004*

## REALISTIC VIEW OF THEIR POPULARITY PROTECTS CHILDREN AGAINST EFFECTS OF SOCIAL REJECTION

Human immodesty knows no bounds. Most people think they're better looking than average, more intelligent, better at driving and less likely to get ill. Psychologists seeking to explain this common delusion have suggested it serves a protective role: a shield against the depressing realities of fate, fallibility and social spite. However, a surprising new study by Sander Thomaes and colleagues directly contradicts this account. Their investigation with older children suggests that a realistic self view is more protective.

Two hundred and six children aged between nine and twelve years rated how much they liked each of their classmates and how much they thought each of their classmates liked them. This gave the researchers a measure of how realistic each child's self-view was. Two weeks later, the children were invited to play a "Survivor Game" - a kind of internet popularity contest in which the least popular of four players would be voted out of the group. The game was fixed and half

the children were told that they were the least popular. The other children received neutral feedback: another child had been voted out. Using a measure of mood before and after the game, the researchers found that children with a more realistic view of their popularity at school were the least badly affected by rejection in the Survivor Game. By contrast, children with an inflated view of their popularity, or a deflated view, experienced a far greater drop in their mood after being told they'd been voted out.

"Our results suggest that vulnerable children holding positively or negatively distorted self-views may benefit from interventions that target their biased social-reasoning processes," Thomaes and his colleagues concluded.

*Thomaes, S., Reijntjes, A., Orobio de Castro, B., & Bushman, B. (2009). Reality Bites-or Does It? Realistic Self-Views Buffer Negative Mood Following Social Threat. Psychological Science DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02395.x*



## WHY AUTISTIC KIDS MAKE EASY TARGETS FOR SCHOOL BULLIES - CNN.COM

### BY MAIA SZALAVITZ, TIME.COM

A new study finds that children with autism spectrum disorders are bullied far more often than their typically developing peers — nearly five times as often — but parents of autistic kids think the rate is even higher than that. In the study, about 46% of autistic children in middle and high school told their parents they were victimized at school within the previous year, compared with just over 10% of children in the general population.

Calling it a “profound public health problem,” lead author Paul Sterzing of Washington University in St. Louis told the New York Times that the “rate of bullying and victimization among these adolescents is alarmingly high.”

Many people with autism have trouble recognizing social cues, which makes them awkward around others. They also often engage in repetitive behaviours and tend to be hypersensitive to environmental stimuli, all of which makes kids with the disorder ripe targets for bullies who home in on difference and enjoy aggravating their victims. About a third of autism cases are severely disabling — those affected may suffer from low IQ and be unable to talk — but most autistic people have average or high intelligence and many can function well, if their social and sensory issues are appropriately addressed.

That may help explain why the highest functioning children in the current study were at greatest risk of being bullied. While their social awkwardness was more obvious because they actually interacted more with mainstream peers, this made their actual disability less visible, likely making their condition harder for their peers to understand.

Children with autism who could speak well, for example, were three times more likely to be bullied than those whose conversational ability was limited or absent. Further, those who were mainly educated in mainstream classrooms were almost three times more likely to be bullied than those who spent most of their time in special education.

The research, published in the Archives of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine, involved survey data from 920 parents of autistic children, who were asked about their children’s experience of bullying. About 15% of autistic children were reported to be bullies themselves — roughly the same rate as in the general teen population — and 9% were both bullies and victims. Bullying, which can take the form of teasing, exclusion, humiliation or physical assault, can lead to depression and other mental health problems, along with poor grades and even physical illness in victims because of the severe stress it causes.

Parents of autistic children think that the true rates of victimization are far higher than what the study found, and that the rates of perpetrating bullying are lower, precisely because autism disorders are characterized by an inability to read subtle social cues and by difficulty with communication.

In order to report being bullied, you need to understand when you’re being targeted, for example; in contrast, you also need to understand and effectively deploy harassing social information in order to be a bully — things that autistic children generally cannot do. “The only thing I can figure out is that maybe the parents are misinterpreting their children’s clumsy attempts [to socialize],” says Eileen Riley-Hall, a high-school teacher with an autistic daughter and author of “Parenting Girls on the Autism Spectrum: Overcoming the Challenges and Celebrating the Gifts,” regarding the rate of bullies among autistic kids in the new study. “I think of bullying as systematic manipulation. But [autistic children] are so candid; they’re typically not capable of that kind of forethought and malice.”

Impaired language skills and inability to read social cues also mean that many autistic children are bullied without ever realizing it or being able to report it.

Riley-Hall recalled an incident involving her daughter in elementary school. “Little

boys were getting her to say dirty words and laughing at her. She thought this was a good thing and that they were being friendly, but they were really making fun of her,” she says, describing how another girl, who knew it was wrong, told the teacher. But until the classmate reported it, Riley-Hall had no idea that her daughter was being bullied.

With recent national focus on the toll of school bullying, including bullying-related suicide, many school districts are updating their anti-bullying policies and states are giving the issue renewed legislative attention. Research finds that the best anti-bullying programs are comprehensive, involving the entire school and not just individual students. Programs that work well tend to encourage a warm school environment in which diversity is celebrated; they also rely on adults at the school, from the principal to the lunch ladies, to set a tone that clearly indicates that bullying isn’t acceptable.

Studies find that students in schools that create such a welcoming atmosphere not only perform better academically, but also have lower rates of behaviour problems like alcohol and drug use.

But despite efforts to encourage inclusion, acceptance of students with disabilities remains low overall. “There’s still a sense that they are not as fully human as other people,” says Riley-Hall. Another factor that often leads to exclusion and derision is fear. “We have many generations who have had no personal experience with people with special needs, and they fear them,” Riley-Hall notes. “They pass that ignorance on to their children.”

As the study’s authors conclude: “Inclusive classrooms need to increase the social integration of adolescents [with autism] into protective peer groups while also enhancing the empathy and social skills of typically developing students towards their peers with [autism] and other developmental disabilities.”

Indeed, although autistic people are often claimed to lack empathy, their problems usually relate to an inability to understand the minds of others— not an actual lack of care when they know someone is suffering. Meanwhile, people without autism aren’t supposed to be impaired in understanding others’ pain, so what’s our excuse?





## CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES 'SOMETIMES INVISIBLE'

David Matthews, chief executive of CCS Disability Action, says the debate about child poverty has failed to take disability issues into account. Children with disabilities often face the toughest barriers in society. Yet they are sometimes invisible when it comes to government policy and the work of experts. This has been the case with the debate on child poverty and abuse. The Government White Paper and the work of the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty focus far more on ethnicity than disability.

This is because there is a lack of research and statistics on disability, especially compared to Maori and Pasifika. What evidence is available, points to a link between disability and poverty at least as strong as ethnicity, if not stronger. We know that people with disabilities and their families make up a significant percentage of people on benefits. In 2011, 35 per cent of people on a main benefit (main benefits exclude superannuation) claimed a disability allowance. By comparison, 32 per cent of people on main benefits identified as Maori.

Previous research has also shown that 26 per cent of people on the Domestic Purpose Benefits (DPB) have children with disabilities. Thirty-nine per cent of parents receiving the child disability allowance are on a main benefit or superannuation. The employment statistics for people with disabilities are also worse than Maori or Pasifika. Forty-five per cent of people with disabilities are in the labour force compared to 69.3 per cent of Maori and 62.1 per cent of Pasifika.

The lack of statistics also extends to related areas, including child abuse and maltreatment. Unlike ethnicity, the Social

Development Ministry does not identify whether a child has a disability when reporting on abuse and maltreatment in its statistical reports. So we know the ethnicity of children in child abuse cases, but not whether the child has a disability. This is despite overseas research showing children with disabilities to be at acute risk.

One of the most comprehensive studies to date, which took place in the United States, found children with disabilities to be 3.8 times more likely to be neglected, 3.8 times more likely to be physically abused, and 3.1 times more likely to be sexually abused when compared with children without disabilities. Education is another difficult area to get statistics. The Education Review Office provides a detailed breakdown of ethnic groups within schools, but no breakdown based on disability. I can tell you that 4 per cent, or around 98 students, of Auckland Grammar School are Maori, but I can't tell you how many students have special education needs or are in the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS).

The same is true for early childhood education. The ministry does not collect data on disability and participation rates, but does on ethnicity. This is despite, research pointing to major barriers for disabled children in early childhood education. The lack of data causes major problems for priorities and policy. For example, the Education Ministry in its early childhood education work is focusing almost exclusively on Maori and Pasifika. Until the Government and experts recognise and address the barriers children with disabilities and their families face, real solutions to issues like child poverty will be impossible.

"WHEN THE COMMUNITY CUTS ITSELF OFF FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE DISABILITIES, IT ALSO DENIES PART OF WHAT IT IS TO BE HUMAN. A COMMUNITY THAT HAS NO PLACE FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK, OR WALK OR DO HIGHER MATHEMATICS IS FINALLY IMPOVERISHING ITSELF. IT BECOMES INTOLERANT TO DIFFERENCES, THUS NARROWING THE PATH WE ALL MUST TRAVEL. AND IT MAKES ITSELF AN IMPOTENT PLACE, A PLACE THAT DOESN'T HELP EACH OF US LIVE THROUGH DISAPPOINTMENT, AND FAILURE, AND SICKNESS, AND SORROW, AND DEATH—EXPERIENCES THAT CANNOT BE ISOLATED BECAUSE THEY COME TO EVERYONE."

**MARY O'CONNELL 1988**

## INCLUSION

- is about learning to live WITH one another.
- means inviting those who have been left out (in any way) to come in.
- thrives on diversity and celebrates difference.
- means welcoming everyone.
- means living in the form of housing that one chooses.
- means being able to have acquaintances, friends and intimates among a wide
- range of people.

## BELONGING IN THE COMMUNITY

- means having the opportunity to participate in worship, recreation, social
- activities, political activities and shopping.
- is about having the opportunity to work regular employment situations.
- means receiving education in the institutions of one's choice.

# Once upon a time there were three mice.

The first mouse lived in a house that contained, along with furniture and other household goods and possessions, a lever and a hole in the wall from which food was delivered. Each time the mouse pressed the lever he would receive a tasty morsel of his favourite food. The mouse understood that, when he was hungry, all he had to do was press the lever and food would arrive via the hole. The mouse took great comfort in the predictability of his access to food and only pressed the lever when he was hungry.



The second mouse lived in a similar house, also containing a lever and a hole in the wall from which food was delivered. Unfortunately, the lever in his house was faulty and delivered food on an inconsistent basis when he pressed it, such that he might only receive food via the hole on the first, fifth, seventh, or even the eleventh time he pressed the lever. This mouse learnt that he could not always rely on the lever and that he had to press the lever many times, and even when he was not actually hungry, in order to ensure that he would have food. Even after his lever was fixed he found it difficult to stop pressing it frequently and displayed a habit of storing up food.

The third mouse also lived in a similar house, containing a lever and a hole in the wall from which food was to be delivered. However, the lever in his house did not work at all. He soon learnt that he could not rely on the lever and would have to develop other ways of gaining access to food. This belief persisted, even when he moved to a new home with a fully-functioning lever.

*Source: Pearce, C. A Short Introduction to Attachment and Attachment Disorder. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2009*



## BEING SUNSMART - SLIP, SLOP, SLAP AND WRAP

It's not hard to be SunSmart. Research has shown that too much UV radiation causes sunburn, which can lead to skin cancer, and those cancers can be deadly. UV radiation can also damage your skin in other ways, causing premature ageing and wrinkles.

In New Zealand we are lucky to have clear skies and little pollution, but that contributes to very high levels of UV radiation in our environment. Our weather is also changeable – a rainy morning may mean we might leave the house without the sun protection we need if the sun comes out later. And even if the sun doesn't

come out, and temperatures stay low, UV radiation levels can still be high enough to cause sunburn.

That's why you need to be SunSmart, especially during daylight saving months (September to April), and between 10am to 4pm when the sun's UV rays are strongest. And don't forget the children. They most definitely need to slip, slop, slap, and wrap, too. Nearly 80% of lifetime sun exposure happens after the age of 18, so it's important to make sun protection a life-long habit, starting as young as possible.



# RESOURCES

## **TĀPUNA - NGĀ KAITIAKI MOKOPUNA: A RESOURCE FOR MĀORI GRANDPARENTS**

This resource explores the experiences of Māori grandparents in New Zealand. Drawing on interviews and focus groups held with Māori grandparents, the resource describes the pleasures and pressures of grandparenting and the significant role many grandparents play in the lives of whānau.

*This can be downloaded from the Families Commission <http://www.familiescommission.org.nz/publications/research-reports/tāpuna—ngā-kaitiaki-mokopuna>*

## **CHILDREN'S PHOTOGRAPHY IN CHRISTCHURCH - WAYS THEY SEE THEIR CITY**

4 children from Christchurch schools are participating in a photography project to give young people a voice on how Christchurch has been affected by the earthquakes. Images from the project will be exhibited to the public from the 8th December at Canterbury Museum!

## **VAGUS LINE PHONE 0800 56 76 666**

As from 1 October 2012, the Vagus line from Chinese Mental Health Consultation Services Trust will be in service. This new service is to promote family harmony among Chinese, enhance parenting skills, decrease conflict among family members (couple, parent-child, in-laws) and stop family violence.

They provide free, confidential and professional consultation such as providing parenting strategies, communication skills.

*Service hours are Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 12 noon to 2pm.*

## **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](mailto:info@wclc.org.nz), and is available for free online: [www.communitylaw.org.nz](http://www.communitylaw.org.nz)*

## **ACTIVE PLAY**

### **PORTUGAL: INACTIVE CHILDREN ARE MORE CLUMSY**

Children who are sedentary for a large part of their time are more clumsy and uncoordinated than their active peers, a Portuguese study has revealed.

A survey of 213 children aged between nine and ten years found that children spending more than 70 per cent of their time on sedentary activities displayed motor coordination skills up to nine times poorer than other children.

*<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajhb.22310/full>*

### **SWEDEN: ONLY CHILDREN PLAY OUTSIDE LESS**

Children with no siblings play outside less often and are more likely to have television in their bedrooms than those with brothers or sisters, according to new research.

Onlies also have a 50 per cent higher

chance of being obese or overweight - independently of those other factors. The study, published in Nutrition and Diabetes journal, looked at 12,700 children from eight European countries.

*<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/250329.php>*

### **US: AN APPLE - AND TWENTY MINUTES OF PLAY - A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY**

A child's risk of diabetes as well as total body fat can be significantly reduced by 20 minutes of daily vigorous activity over a three month period.

A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association looked at 222 overweight, previously inactive 7- to 11-year olds.

A third of the group maintained their sedentary lifestyle; a third began a 20 minute, active play-based exercise routine for three months; and a third exercised for 40 minutes. Compared with the control group, children who exercised for 20 minutes had an 18 per cent reduction in insulin resistance, a risk factor for developing diabetes. Those exercising for 40 minutes experienced a 22 per cent reduction.

*<http://playingout.net/>*

**"HE WHO WOULD LEARN TO FLY ONE DAY MUST FIRST LEARN TO STAND AND WALK AND RUN AND CLIMB AND DANCE; ONE CANNOT FLY INTO FLYING."**

**FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844-1900), SCHOLAR, WRITER, PHILOSOPHER**

# FREE PLAY TRUMPS PAID FOR EXCURSIONS FOR SUMMER FUN



Playing in the garden or park with friends, building dens and having water fights are the three activities that children rate most highly for summer fun, according to a new index devised by Sainsbury's. The supermarket chain asked 1,500 children aged 5-11 across the UK to rank their favourite summer activities against criteria such as how much fun each is, how happy it makes them feel and how special and memorable it is. It then compared the pleasure each activity delivers relative to its cost to calculate its position in its 'Kids' Simple Pleasures Index'.

The other activities appearing in the top ten were all free; bike riding, outdoor games, tree climbing, mud pie making, berry picking, eating icecream in the sun

and feeding the ducks. Going to the cinema and leisure centre activities ranked 12th and 13th respectively, while theme park visits came 21st on the list.

A parallel survey of 2,000 parents found that their most cherished childhood summer memories chimed strongly with the activities favoured by kids today. Almost seven in ten parents said playing with their friends was their best memory while over half (56%) said simple garden fun, riding their bike (52%) and going to the park (51%).

Dr. Linda Papadopoulos, child psychologist, said: "Summer memories last us a lifetime and parents can learn a lot from what their children have told us in this study. While they are busy spending money on

costly activities to ensure their kids have a good summer, children mostly value the simple pleasures that summer brings, and spending time with friends and family. For kids, quantity time with their parents is just as important as quality time."

- Play date in the park or garden
- Water fight
- Building a den in the garden with family or friends
- Bike ride
- Outdoor games e.g. Tag, stuck in the mud or hide & seek
- Climb a tree
- Mud pie making
- Berry picking
- Eating ice cream in the sun
- Feeding the ducks
- Planting flowers
- Trip to the cinema
- Leisure complex activities (ice skating, bowling, etc)
- Picnic
- Playing in a paddling pool or sprinkler in the garden
- Flying a kite
- Trip to the local beach/lido or national park
- Backyard camping with family or friends
- Farm trip
- Trip to the zoo / safari park
- Theme park or attraction
- Playing on the computer
- Sport or music lesson
- Horse riding
- Summer camp

## "BIRDS FLY, FISH SWIM, CHILDREN PLAY." LANDRETH





**"SOMETIMES THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN A WHOLE DAY IS THE REST WE TAKE BETWEEN TWO DEEP BREATHS."** -

ETTY HILLESUM (1914-1943), DUTCH WRITER

# THE BODY-MIND CONNECTION

There is a lot of research into the use of exercise to improve low mood, and I was interested recently to read new research that suggests an increased awareness of our posture can also bring great benefits to our mood. The expression "keep your chin up", urging us to remain cheerful in a difficult situation, is not always the most compassionate piece of advice. But it seems that by raising our head up and being aware of maintaining an upright posture, we may be able to boost our energy levels and mood.

Erik Peper is an internationally recognised authority on biofeedback, self-regulation and stress management. He suggests that our modern lifestyle has resulted in poor posture with many slouching while walking, sitting for hours collapsed in front of the computer or TV, or slouched forward while texting or working on smart phones.

The findings suggest that, for people with a history of depression, energy levels may covertly increase or decrease depending upon posture. When you have less energy, you feel you can achieve less, and this feeling tends to increase depressive thinking.

MHF News

## MOTIVATING PROGRAM STAFF MEMBERS

**"IF YOU TREAT AN INDIVIDUAL AS HE IS, HE WILL REMAIN HOW HE IS. BUT IF YOU TREAT HIM AS IF HE WERE WHAT HE OUGHT TO BE AND COULD BE, HE WILL BECOME WHAT HE OUGHT TO BE AND COULD BE."**

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE (1749-1832),  
GERMAN PLAYWRIGHT, POET AND NOVELIST

It's easy for after-school professionals to get caught up in day-to-day activities and go through their days by rote. Sandy Roberts, a child-care professional, encourages program managers to provide activities for their employees that will motivate them and help them grow into leaders themselves. Some ideas for activities that can be conducted at a staff meeting include:

**Nametags** - Place art materials in the middle of the floor and ask each staff member to make nametags that tell something about themselves without using their names. Give them a chance to explain their tags to the group and have them wear the tags the rest of the day. When children ask about the tag, it gives the staff member a chance to talk about herself and promotes a positive self-image.

**Treasure hunt** - Have staff members collect items from around the site that reveal something about themselves. They need to say where the item came from and how it relates to them. This helps them to pay close attention to their surroundings and aids in observation skills.

**Look, Mum, no hands!** - Have staff members try to tell a story while sitting on their hands.



# CHARTER FOR CHILDREN'S PLAY

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## **CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO PLAY**

All children and young people have the right to play and need to play: free to choose what they do – lively or relaxed, noisy or quiet – with the chance to stretch and challenge themselves, take risks and enjoy freedom. The right to play is enshrined in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## **EVERY CHILD NEEDS TIME AND SPACE TO PLAY**

All children and young people – disabled and non-disabled – whatever their age, culture, ethnicity, or social and economic background, need time and space to play freely and confidently with their peers, free of charge, indoors and outdoors, somewhere they feel safe. Play provision should actively include the widest range of children and seek to engage with those from minority groups.

## **ADULTS SHOULD LET CHILDREN PLAY**

Parents, carers and other adults can support children and young people's play by respecting the value and importance of all types of play, playing with their children and by creating opportunities and allowing time for children to play independently with their friends, inside and outside the home.

## **CHILDREN SHOULD BE ABLE TO PLAY FREELY IN THEIR LOCAL AREAS**

Children have the same right to use and enjoy public space as others. Local streets, estates, green spaces, parks and town centres should be accessible for children and young people to move around in safety, should offer places where they can play freely, experience nature, explore their environment and be with their friends.

## **CHILDREN VALUE AND BENEFIT FROM STAFFED PLAY PROVISION**

Children should have access to a choice of staffed facilities where children's play rights and needs are the first priority, such as adventure playgrounds, play centres, holiday play schemes, after-school play clubs, breakfast play clubs, toy libraries, play buses and play ranger services.

## **CHILDREN'S PLAY IS ENRICHED BY SKILLED PLAYWORKERS**

Qualified, skilled playworkers are trained to put children's play needs at the centre of their work in a variety of settings, enhancing the range and quality of play experiences for all children. They are the best people to run staffed play provision for school-aged children. The role of the playworker is as important as that of any skilled professional working with children and should be respected and rewarded accordingly.

## **CHILDREN NEED TIME AND SPACE TO PLAY AT SCHOOL**

The school day should allow time for children to relax and play freely with their friends. Young children learn best through play and, as they get older, play supports and enriches their learning. Children learn best if teaching is creative and enjoyable. In school, time and space for play and outdoor learning is as important as formal teaching. School grounds should be good places to play.

## **CHILDREN SOMETIMES NEED EXTRA SUPPORT TO ENJOY THEIR RIGHT TO PLAY**

Children and young people living away from home or visiting unfamiliar or controlled environments such as hospital, prison, immigration centres, and residential homes and schools, sometimes experience fear, anxiety and discomfort. For these children it is especially important.

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## **'DUMBED DOWN' PLAYGROUNDS COULD HARM KIDS**

"Dumbed down" playgrounds designed to eliminate injuries to children may make them more dangerous by encouraging risky play, a researcher warns. Playground researcher Dr Rebecca Sargisson said most playground injuries resulted from children using equipment in a way different from its intended use.

Children often introduced risk to their play because they were bored with the standard use of equipment, Dr Sargisson said. A psychology lecturer at the University of Waikato's Tauranga campus, Dr Sargisson

visited 56 playgrounds throughout the North Island as part of a study of playground safety and children's play preferences.

Her report, which she co-authored with her husband Dr Ian McLean, is due to be published in the academic journal *Children, Youth, and Environments* next year.

Dr Sargisson said she had seen children skateboard down slides, stand on see-saw seats, walk across the top bar of a swing set and climb around the outside of a bridge.

Tauranga City Council planners should consider designing challenging equipment for the playground planned for the new waterfront development, she said.

"[Children] will find their own risk so why not prepare them for that? The perception that an activity is safe may lead a child to take greater risks," Dr Sargisson's report concluded. "Any further attempt to reduce injuries in playgrounds will likely be at the expense of challenging play opportunities, and risk-taking should be acknowledged as an important planned function of public playgrounds."

Dr Sargisson's research showed swings were the most popular pieces of equipment used at playgrounds, followed by roundabouts and climbing equipment. Most accidents happened on slides, usually because children were using the slide in an unintended way.

Planners should consider the direction in which slides were placed in relation to the sun, as many slides became too hot and children would not use them, Dr Sargisson said. One way to make slides safer, without reducing the height, was to place them on hill slopes so that the distance between the slide and the ground was not too high at any point.

All in all, Dr Sargisson said Tauranga had good playgrounds. Memorial Park was a good example of a fun playground with a mix of equipment for different levels of skill.

Bark was a better play surface than grass or concrete, however, sand would be safer and more fun for children, Dr Sargisson said.

*By Joseph Aldridge, Bay of Plenty Times*

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# WILD PLAYGROUNDS

Maurice Sendak (Where the Wild Things are) once said, "Children are tough, though we tend to think of them as fragile. They have to be tough. Childhood is not easy." He gave kids a lot more credit than we tend to these days, respecting both their resilience and their imaginations.

Many of today's playgrounds do neither, lacking both whimsy and risk. After receiving the Caldecott medal in 1964, Sendak said, "... it is through fantasy that children achieve catharsis. It is the best means they have for taming wild things."

In honour of Sendak, here are some "wild playgrounds": For more check out the delicious website KaBOOM @ <http://kaboom.org/>





# OSCAR NETWORK TRAINING AND EVENT CALENDAR TERM 1 2013

EVENT	BRIEF RUN-DOWN	DATE	TIME & PLACE	COST (GST INCLUDED)
Full First Aid Training	Suitable for all Staff	Saturday 16th February	St Columbus Parish Centre 452 Main South Rd, Hornby	\$165 per person
Problem Solving with Nikki Coleman	Suitable for all Staff and Management	Tuesday 26th February	10am – 12 noon OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	\$34.50 members \$86.30 non-members <b>Limited to 12</b>
South Canterbury Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practical Strategies for Challenging Behaviour</li> </ul> <b>Time to be advised</b>	Saturday 2nd March	Kids Alive Programme 10 Cox Street, Geraldine	\$34.50 members \$86.30 non-members <b>Limited to 12</b>
Movie'n Munch	<b>"The Teenage Brain - shut for renovation"</b> Nathan Mikarere-Wallis	Tuesday 5th March	10am – 1.30pm OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	<b>FREE</b> <b>Bring your own lunch</b>
Core Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health &amp; Safety 1</li> </ul>	Tuesday 12th March	10am – 12.30pm OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	\$34.50 members \$86.30 non-members <b>Limited to 15</b>
Evening Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency 1</li> </ul>	Thursday 14th March	6pm – 9.30pm OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	\$34.50 members \$86.30 non-members <b>Limited to 12</b> <b>Tea Provided</b>
Training Morning	Suitable for all Staff and Management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Protection</li> <li>Treaty of Waitangi</li> </ul>	Saturday 16th March	9.15am – 12.30pm Waltham School Hall Cnr Vienna & Hastings St East Waltham	\$34.50 members \$86.30 non-members
Management Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment Matters</li> </ul>	Tuesday 26th March	10am – 12.30pm OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	\$34.50 members \$86.30 non-members
Movie'n Munch	<b>"The Nurture Room"</b> where miracles can happen	Tuesday 2nd April	12am – 1.30pm OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	<b>FREE</b> <b>Bring your own lunch</b>
Cluster & Training Rangiora	Suitable for all Staff and Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code of Ethics</li> </ul>	Tuesday 9th April	10am – 11.00am 11am – 1pm Rangiora War Memorial Hall Albert Street, Rangiora	<b>Cluster: FREE</b> \$34.50 members \$86.30 non-members
Cluster South East	Suitable for all Staff and Management	Wednesday 10th April	10am – 12 noon OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	<b>FREE</b>
Cluster North West	Suitable for all Staff and Management	Thursday 11th April	10am – 12 noon After School Care Bryndwr 117 Blighs Road, Bryndwr	<b>FREE</b>
Otago Training	<b>Morning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment Matters or</li> <li>Practical Strategies for Challenging Behaviour</li> </ul> <b>Afternoon:</b> Practical Strategies con't	Saturday 13th April	9.00am – 3.00pm Alhambra Oaks Motor Lodge Conference room 588 Great King Street Dunedin	\$34.50 each session \$57.50 for both <b>Limited to 20</b> <b>Lunch provided</b>