

SNOOP



OSCAR Network
Christchurch

SUPPORTING THE NETWORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES
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**LANGUAGE IS POWERFUL HOW TO BORE THE CHILDREN
7 STRATEGIES TO OPTIMISE OPTIMISM IN TEENS ATTUNEMENT
BEING AWARE OF OTHERS THE FIVER CHALLENGE TALKING TO
CHILDREN ABOUT TRAGIC EVENTS IN THE NEWS RELATIONSHIP -
BASED PRACTICES TOP TEN TIPS FOR PRIVACY**



ENHANCING CHILDREN'S PLAY : WHAKAREWA / TE TAAKARO TAMARIKI





THE OSCAR NETWORK

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 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 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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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PARENTS

By nature of their development, children are more sensitive than adults. Children will sense emotional energy three times as strongly as an adult simply because their regulatory systems are in the earliest stages of development and they must rely on their senses for survival. Whereas the adult's regulatory system has been functioning for so long, at such a continued state, that it has become conditioned to its environment, and therefore, somewhat desensitized to outside input. Also as adults we have learned to rely on our cognitive brains to a greater degree than our emotional brains.

Our children are still very much in tune to their emotional experience therefore more likely to react from it. Unlike our children, as adults we think we are listening to our cognitive brain, being logical and making sense without realizing we are being dictated to by our emotional brain. In other words, we aren't always as smart as we sound! Furthermore, in this manner we are not always sensitive to our children's deeper needs. We must learn to listen and respond to their behaviours, rather than react. This emotional communication is the best reflection for what they truly need.

AND THEIR CHILDREN

BY BRYAN POST

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

LANGUAGE IS POWERFUL!

What do you convey in the words you use with boys?

Explore whether your conversations with boys are perpetuating or challenging gender biases.

Being unemotional, tough, sexually aggressive and in control – all of these are qualities of masculinity that show up in many cultural and media messages about gender. Thanks to the work of educators and scholars including Jackson Katz and Byron Hurt, along with the efforts of organizations like The Representation Project and the Media Education Foundation, there is growing understanding about ways these messages affect the lives of boys and girls. We also have more insight into ways that messages about gender can be linked to issues of violence within our communities.

It's important to help young people (and adults) learn to build their capacity to read and challenge these kinds of limiting media and cultural messages. Many experts also stress the need for adults to examine the language they use in their interactions with children and adolescents. Hearing adults use language that is “gendered” –

that is, language that incorporates gender differences, stereotypes and biases – can deeply affect how young people think about and act toward themselves and others.

Whether you're a woman, man, parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, neighbour, youth leader or other kind of adult in the lives of kids, you can strengthen your ability to use language that contributes to the health and wholeness of girls and boys. The following are some suggestions for your interactions with boys:

Notice the words you use to describe boys.

“Aren't you a tough little guy?” “You're the man of the house.” “He's so strong – he didn't even cry when he got hurt today.” Throughout their lives, and starting very young, boys take in messages about the need to be rough and tough, in control and in charge and unemotional. An overabundance of these kinds of messages from the significant adults in their lives can lead to boys believing that masculinity is limited to these qualities.

Find opportunities to focus on boys' complexity and wholeness, including their range of feelings, qualities of empathy and nurturing, whole-hearted strength, curiosity and intelligence. Instead of describing that new-born boy as a “strong little man,” talk with him about his sparkling and caring eyes and his inquisitiveness. Also, even if you think he has no idea of what you're saying, don't underestimate the value of practising these kinds of conversations. Compliment your 3-year-old grandson about the gentle

and caring way he plays with his stuffed animals. Rather than pushing the 8-year-old boy in your afterschool programme to join the rough-and-tumble game of tag that the other kids are involved in, share that you admire his enthusiasm for the book he's engrossed in. If your teen son likes a popular singer whose songs you consider to be aggressive and offensive, ask what he admires about him. While he might mention that he likes the artist's songs, he might also comment that he appreciates their writing talent, his relationship with his young children and the opportunities that he's provided for up-and-coming artists. All of these could lead to deeper conversations about ways that some artists have had to compromise parts of who they are in order to succeed.

Pay attention to how you talk about bravery and courage.

Too many messages aimed at boys limit bravery and courage to standing up to or dominating an opponent. Help boys think about and identify examples of emotional courage, like the courage involved with speaking in front of a group, trying out for a team or using one's voice to interrupt hurtful bullying behaviours'. Be vulnerable and share with boys about times that you've had to display emotional courage in your work or personal life. Keep in mind that girls can benefit from conversations about bravery and courage, too.

Go further and notice the language you use to describe boys and men who don't fit inside the so-called “real boy” box.

Research shows that kids frequently get bullied during eprimary school for being a boy who acts or looks “too much like a girl” or a girl who acts or looks “too much like a boy.” Because biases related to gender, gender expression and sexual orientation are so pervasive; many of us may be unaware of how they show up in our own language and behaviours. Examine whether you’re using phrases like “those are boy activities (or boy games or boy toys),” “those colours are for girls,” or “don’t act (or cry) like a little girl.” If you notice yourself using phrases like these, don’t be afraid to model what it sounds like to catch yourself in the act and challenge what you just said. Kids will appreciate your willingness to show that you too have learned messages that are limiting and toxic, and that you’re not afraid to grow and change in healthy and positive ways.

Provide a thoughtful response when a boy shares concerns about not measuring up to cultural standards of masculinity.

When a boy shares his thoughts about not fitting in with the ways boys and men are “supposed” to look and act, listen deeply and respond in ways that take his concerns seriously. Rather than dismissing these concerns or responding in a way that makes him think that he’ll eventually get past his concerns and “fit in,” stress that you love and admire him for all of the qualities that make up who he is.

What do you convey in the words you use with girls?

Notice whether a girl’s appearance is the first thing you focus on.

“You’re so cute!” “Don’t you look pretty today?” “That outfit looks so great on you – did you lose weight?” Throughout their lives, girls hear over and over again that their appearance is valued above all else. An overabundance of these kinds of

messages from the significant adults in their lives can contribute to girls believing that their primary value lies within **what they look like** rather than **who they are**. Find opportunities to focus on girls’ intellect, abilities, skills, desires and other aspects of their physicality. Share with that new-born girl in your family how alert she is and how strongly she grips your finger (even if you think she has no idea what you’re saying, don’t underestimate the value of practising these kinds of conversations). The next time you see your 2-year-old granddaughter, comment on her awesome ability to balance herself as she scoots across the room. Rather than asking the rambunctious group of 6-year-old girls who just arrived at your afterschool programme to be more “lady like,” compliment them on their energy and ask them how they could put it to good use outdoors. If your teen daughter likes a popular female celebrity, ask what she admires about her. While she might mention that she admires the woman’s hair, style or body, she might also comment that she appreciates her talents, business skills, generosity or struggles she’s overcome – all of which can lead to deeper conversations about what it means to be female in our culture.

Provide a thoughtful response when a girl shares concerns about her appearance.

Girls aren’t born hating their bodies – it’s something they learn. From an early age, many girls voice concerns about not “measuring up” to the standards of beauty they see reflected in their culture. When girls question their appearance (“Am I pretty?”) or share feelings of inadequacy (“I hate my body!”), we often provide automatic responses like, “You are beautiful.” Although these responses come from a place of care and love, this kind of feedback can unintentionally contribute to emphasizing the importance of physical beauty above all else. Practising responses that convey that you find this young person beautiful because of all the qualities that make up who she is.

Examine your self-talk about your own appearance.

Although both men and women make disparaging comments about their own bodies, doing so is particularly prevalent among women. Watch what you model in your own self-talk and keep in mind that girls are constantly taking in your messages

and thinking about how to apply them to their own lives. Rather than describing yourself as needing to “go on that new diet to lose weight,” talk about the need to take care of your body with healthy nutrition and fitness – and try to put these into action. Modelling healthy self-care, self-love and self-acceptance can be incredibly powerful for the young people in your life. During these conversations, also help girls think about the profit motive behind the pressure they feel to be perfect – billions of dollars are spent annually in the United States on cosmetics alone!

Take time to critique how gender is reflected in the words you use.

We may not realize that using words like fireman, policeman, mailman, chairman or salesman can send subtle messages to kids that the people behind these titles are primarily men. Instead, use words like fire fighter, police officer, mail carrier, chair and sales clerk – words that are more inclusive and that help girls see possibilities in terms of their own future roles. Also challenge yourself about using the word “girls” when referring to women. Describing adult women as “girls” can send a message that undervalues and undermines the maturity and life experiences of women. Although referring to women as “girls” or “gals” may seem relatively harmless, there’s definitely a distinction between the ways that men and women are described within our culture – consider how rarely adult males are referred to as “boys.”

Becoming adept at these kinds of conversations takes practice, and it’s important for adults to “do their own work” by reflecting on their personal thoughts, feelings, beliefs and behaviours related to gender and gender expression. It’s also helpful for us to do our own work around biases we may hold related to other areas of human difference, such as race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation (real or perceived) and disabilities. Find ways to hold yourself accountable – and to hold yourself gently – as you help young people along this important journey.

by Janet Olsen, Michigan State University Extension

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HOW TO BORE THE CHILDREN



Here is how to make a child bored: first and foremost, keep him indoors so that the infinitude of nature, its endless variation and chaotic messiness is replaced by a finite, orderly, predictable realm. Second, through television and video games, habituate him to intense stimuli so that everything else seems boring by comparison. Third, eliminate as much as possible any unstructured time with other children, so that he loses his capacity for creative play and needs entertainment instead. Fourth, shorten his attention span with fast-paced programming, dumbed-down books, and frequent interruptions of his play. Fifth, hover over him whenever possible to stunt his self-trust and make him dependent on outside stimulation. Sixth, hurry him from activity to activity to create anxiety about time and eliminate the easy sense of timelessness native to the young.

No one, of course, sets out on purpose to strip away their children's most primal self-sufficiency - the self-sufficiency of play - but that is the net effect of a culture fixated on safety, bound to schedules, and addicted to entertainment. In a former time, children, despite a dearth of complicated toys, were rarely bored. Ask your grandparents whether they were bored as children, with their bikes, bats and balls, simple dolls that didn't speak or move by themselves, in the

days before television. Boredom, in fact, is a very recent word, apparently not having appeared in print until the mid-19th century. It is not a natural state, and did not exist in state of nature, or in a state anywhere near nature. It is a symptom of our alienation.

Boredom, however, is quite good for the economy. It motivates all kinds of consumption, an endless hunger to keep ourselves entertained. It points therefore to a need that was once met without money, but that is now met with money; the phenomenon of boredom and its alleviation exemplifies a much more general economic principle.

In order for the (money) economy to grow, some function once exercised without money must be converted into a good or a service. One can view economic growth as a progressive strip-mining of nature and community, turning the former into commodities and the latter into paid services, depleting, respectively, the natural and social commons. Pollute the water and sell bottled water; disempower folk healing and make people pay for medical care; destroy cultural traditions that bestow identity and sell brand name sneakers... the examples are endless. Boredom is a symptom of a similar strip-mining of what was once a kind

of wealth native to us all: the ability to feel good doing nothing, the ability to create our own fun, a general sense of sovereignty over our own time. This is a form of what I call spiritual capital.

As I write this, my six-year-old sits a few feet away, wholly absorbed in threading a coloured string through an old tape roll. Without a screen in front of him, his brain must make its own images - an ability that counts among the forms of spiritual capital. Before that he was begging to be allowed to watch a video. His whining and cajoling seemed almost like an addict wanting a fix. I haven't tried to isolate him from society. Even though we don't have TV, we do have videos, and he still gets plenty of that kind of thing elsewhere. Besides, there are rarely any kids playing outside. Their parents won't let them, at least not in this neighbourhood. They are afraid: afraid of nature, afraid of other people, afraid of what might happen, suspicious of play, loath to have their children unsupervised.

Let us create a world of real wealth, where our ability to play and imagine are intact, and where the outdoors is full of children.

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7 Strategies To Optimise Optimism In Teens - And Why It Matters

“If you can get through year 8 and year 9, you can get through anything.”

That’s a saying I share with students, teachers, and parents alike. These are tough years for many students, and if school is not a positive experience for them, they can feel hopeless. Hopelessness – believing things are bad and are going to stay bad – leads to helplessness. Helplessness leads to depression.

Always a loser

In the 1980’s researchers began to notice that teenagers often hold strong and permanent beliefs about personality and ability.

“Once a loser, always a loser.”

“I suck at maths. I’m just stupid when it comes to numbers – especially polynomials and calculus. Plus I’ll never use it.”

“I’m ugly. My face is full of pimples and I’ll be stuck like this forever.”

This permanent belief about something intrinsic and all-encompassing can paralyse our teens, giving them no faith in the future, and closing them off to the possibility of good things happening.

In other words, these beliefs shut down optimism, and harm their hope.

Reduce the risk of depression with optimism

New research published in Clinical Psychological Science indicates that if we can help kids sense that things can change for the better, we can mitigate depression risk. That is, optimistic teens – the ones who believe that good things can happen and personality, ability, or even looks aren’t necessarily permanent – have higher wellbeing than less-optimistic teens.

David Yeager’s recent study took 600 Year 9 students who participated in a brief

intervention that emphasised how people can change. Students read articles about the brain’s capacity for growth and learning (brain plasticity and ‘growth mindset’ concepts). The students also read advice from older students reassuring them that high school gets better.

Students were then asked to write about their own experiences of people’s personalities changing.

Nine months later, the experimenters checked in on the students. Among the control group (who did not read the articles or write about changes in people), rates of depressive symptoms increased from 18% to 25%. Things were worse, rather than better. But those who were involved in the intervention fared better. While they didn’t necessarily improve, they certainly didn’t decline as the control group had. (Even students who were victims of bullying remained resilient.)

What does it all mean?

Giving teenagers hope at one of the toughest times of their lives appears to reduce the danger that they’ll become depressed.

Here are 7 strategies to optimise optimism in our teens:

1. Empathise

Often our teens just need someone to be there and understand. Letting them know you can see they feel hopeless and they wonder why they should bother can be powerful for them. It validates their experience. Saying, “I felt like that when I was 15 too” can help them. But then we need to move them to a belief in a positive future doing the following:

2. Emphasise “yet”.

When a teen says, “I can’t”, smile and gently add “yet” to the end of their sentence. When they say, “I hate calculus. It’s stupid. I’ll never use it”, acknowledge their feelings, and say, “It’s a struggle right now isn’t it. You can’t do it yet.” Those three little letters imply both an expectation that it will be done, and a belief that it can be done.

3. Steer their focus to what they can control

Teens often worry about things that they have no control over. Ask them, “What can you do right now about this?” If they can’t do anything, acknowledge the predicament and empathise. If they can, steer them towards an answer. “You feel lousy. What options do you have?” “You’re struggling with the assignment. Where is the best place you can think of to start.”

4. Focus on the end

A high school teacher used to do a regular “talk” with her students. She would write on the board, “There is life after high school – and it’s GREAT!” She would chat briefly about their struggles, and then promise that it gets better. The students looked forward to the future. The talk had impact.

5. Emphasise strengths

Tell them what you see in them. “You have some remarkable strengths that you don’t get to use enough at school...” and be specific about what they are! (You might find out what they want to do and tell them, “You’ll be great at that – with hard work you’ll excel.”)

6. Understand mindsets

Become acquainted with research around the way our brains change. There are popular books such as Carol Dweck’s Mindset and Norman Doidge’s The Brain that Changes Itself. These books will change the way you talk about ability, possibility, and the future – and inspire your teens to be more optimistic.

7. Avoid the superficial

If a teen feels lousy, being told to “cheer up, it will get better” is unlikely to help. No one believes you when they don’t feel you understand. It feels dismissive and patronising.

Optimism – believing that good things are coming soon – may be one of our most positive tools for boosting our teen’s self-belief, and reducing the dangers of depression. Good things are coming. The future is bright. Help our teens believe it.

Dr Justin Coulson
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ATTUNEMENT

BEING AWARE OF OTHERS

THE FOURTH CORE STRENGTH

Humans have to manage a constant stream of sensory information. Some of the most complex forms of sensory information come from other humans. Spoken language, subtle gestures and non-verbal expressions all come into play when humans interact with each other. The ability to be aware or attuned to others is essential to human communication and successful interactions and relationships. As a child grows they become more aware of how complex other people are by watching and listening to others and forming friendships.

When negotiating between relationships the brain uses a set of rules that makes the process easier. These rules are based on association and generalisation. Each sense can only receive and process one form of information at a time. When two or more senses receive information at the same time then the brain makes a connection or association between those sensations. By making associations the brain allows humans to make an accurate, internal representation of what is occurring in the world around them.

It then incorporates the representation

and stores it as memory. Memory allows humans to create a catalogue of relational experiences. When a new experience occurs humans are able to either match the experience to another one in the relational catalogue or create a new experience. They are thus able to judge the situation or experience. Opinions are the result of the brain generalising from a past situation to a new one with similar features.

The first memories of a child are based on the relational catalogue formed during their first attachments. If these attachments are nurturing and predictable then the child will generalise future interactions to positive relational memories.

This will allow the child to form a large number and variety of relationships where they can learn to value others. A child's ability to self-regulate allows them to develop a healthy awareness of others and their ability to affiliate with a wide range of people allows them to build a diverse relational catalogue.

Adults in the child or young person's life can model awareness by talking through their

actions and words in relation to people and events. When a child or young person is confronted with a stereotype, encouraging positive thoughts that challenge the stereotype over time can assist with increasing their awareness. Adults should talk through the origins of the stereotype and whether the stereotype is a fair representation.

A child or young person's 'relational catalogue' can also be broadened by introducing them to different cultures, people, religions and languages. By encouraging better knowledge of other cultures and people, adults can assist the child or young person develop positive relational memories.

ATTUNEMENT: READING THE RHYTHMS OF THE CHILD

"My teacher can hear me thinking. She knows when I want to paint and then she lets me." - Comments of a four-year-old girl explaining why she loves to go to school.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTUNEMENT

Each day, in every classroom, there are

thousands of human-to-human interactions. With words, smiles, and open arms, teachers and children seek to communicate. And in doing so, a teacher can connect with children in ways that allow sharing, soothing, and learning. Yet, there can be no communication if the instructive words are not heard, the tender touch is unfelt, and the admiring gaze is unseen. How often our best words dissolve unheard by those we wish to touch. Fear, anger, frustration, confusion, pre-occupation, or boredom has made them “deaf.” This was the wrong time or the wrong way to use those words. There has been a mismatch. What you wish to say, in that moment, is not very important to the listener. And you have not perceived what they are saying to you: “Not now. Don’t use words. I am tired, scared, hungry, bored, angry.”

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

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

The children, in some ways, have the easier task. The teacher has the challenge of being attuned to twenty or more different children. Each of the children will have different strengths, vulnerabilities, sensory

preferences, and style of exploration (e.g., timid vs. bold). And each child’s “receptivity” shifts throughout the day. In one moment a child may be alert, attentive, and capable of tolerating the frustrations of a new challenge; hours later this same child is tired, hungry, fussy, and will be easily frustrated by any new challenge. This is the time to give the child something simple and familiar — something previously mastered — such as coloring, or building with blocks.

INDIVIDUAL RHYTHMS

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

Furthermore, in addition to the individual rhythms of the child, each day and week, as well as the school year as a whole, have superimposing rhythms that influence a child’s “receptivity.” The first few weeks of school, for example, are so novel that most children require time to adjust and become familiar with the novelty before they can learn efficiently. In the last month of school, children sense the change in pace and anticipate the upcoming transition, again being less capable of efficiently learning. There is a rhythm to the week. Mondays are different from Fridays. There is a rhythm to the day: a teacher is more likely to find a receptive class in the middle of the morning than in the 30 minutes before school is over.

Throughout our lives, attunement helps us build and maintain our relationships. The capacity to be sensitive to someone else can be taught. The teacher can help children learn to be better attuned (see strategies, below). By taking the child’s innate preference to read non-verbal cues and developing their capacity to watch, listen, and learn, we will be fostering socio-

emotional literacy, and helping our children become fluent in the most important of all human languages — socio-emotional.

We can teach children non-verbal language just as we help them develop verbal language skills. Simple questions and instruction are a good start:

- “How can you tell if someone is happy?”
- “How can you tell if someone is sad?”
- “How does it feel when no one listens to you?”
- “When someone is speaking to you, you should look at them.”
- “You can understand someone if you listen to their words and watch how they behave.”

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Each child is unique. The attuned teacher becomes an historian, remembering and cataloguing a child’s style of engagement and communication.
- Learn individual strengths, vulnerabilities (one child may tolerate lots of stimulation while another is easily overwhelmed), and preferred style of communication (Are they verbal? Do they get quiet when upset?).
- To develop this classroom “catalogue,” become an observer. Be sensitive to changes in the rhythms of a child’s movement, the tone of their voice, and the intensity of their activity.
- Anxious, shy, and timid children may prefer solitary learning activities. Social children may learn concepts best in groups. Popular children enjoy recess, where their leadership and popularity can shine. Marginalized children often dislike recess; unstructured social time makes them feel more isolated and excluded.
- The most powerful of our non-verbal communication instruments is the face. A child’s face, and yours, is a barometer expressing interest, investment, curiosity, joy, fear, anger, confusion, or doubt.
- Be aware that due to your influential position, words, actions and expressions are magnified —both good and bad. Your criticism can feel crushing, but your approval will be motivating, energizing and powerful.

CORE STRENGTH: ATTUNEMENT

Few things capture the depth of a wide range of human feelings like the power of music. Music touches the heart and sparks

poignant memories with a force words lack. As a person with limited musical talent, I stand in awe of talented musicians who are able not only to create harmony, but to detect subtle changes in the pitch of their instrument and make needed adjustments when they detect even slightly discordant sounds. Musicians are “attuned” to their instruments – they focus intense attention on the tone emanating from their instrument to detect changes that will result in a disharmonious result.

In human relationships, attunement is the ability to correctly read and effectively respond to the needs and wants of others, and it is one of the Core Strengths identified by neuroscientist Dr. Bruce Perry as essential to optimal child development. Although it is possible to live an emotionally healthy life if one is musically tone-deaf, to be “tone deaf” when it comes to reading others can result in significant challenges for our children. If a human is unable to recognize the emotional cues that are part of every-day communication, they will be unable to successfully participate in social relationships.

Children develop the capacity to recognize the needs, interests, strengths and values of other people through experience. They are not born as attuned humans. Infants are fully self-absorbed, and it is up to attuned care-givers to learn to read and respond to the infant’s signals. This attuned interaction from a loving caregiver becomes the basis for the child’s development of social attunement. When a child interacts with people, one area of the brain processes and attends to the words, while other areas are focused on the nonverbal actions that accompany the words. Through this process, a child begins to make a mental catalogue of connections between facial expressions, voice tone, body posture, and behaviours.

Attunement depends upon our capacity for non-verbal communication. Some children have difficulty accurately interpreting other people’s emotions, putting them at a disadvantage in all types of human interactions. There are things parents can do to assist their children in developing this skill. Parents can model awareness by being aware themselves talking to children about how other people might feel in various situations. This is particularly important

as children become aware of people who may appear different from them. The more attuned a person is to others with whom they interact, the less likely they are to categorize people with negative stereotypes.

One definition of attunement is “to bring into a harmonious or responsive relationship.”

Musicians do this because they are “tuned in” to their instruments and to the surrounding music.

As you hear the beautiful music of this season, remember that you can help your children “tune in” to others in their world.

Dr. Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., is an internationally recognized authority on brain development and children in crisis. Dr. Perry leads the ChildTrauma Academy, a pioneering centre providing service, research and training in the area of child maltreatment (www.ChildTrauma.org).

SIX CORE STRENGTHS FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

**ATTACHMENT:
MAKING RELATIONSHIPS**

**SELF-REGULATION:
CONTAINING IMPULSES**

**AFFILIATION:
BEING PART OF A GROUP**

**ATTUNEMENT:
BEING AWARE OF OTHERS**

**TOLERANCE:
ACCEPT DIFFERENCES**

**RESPECT:
FINDING VALUE IN
DIFFERENCES**

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www.childtraumaacademy.org*

The

School kids as young as 5 are to be encouraged to become entrepreneurs in a new government initiative announced last week, spearheaded by Lord Young and publicly backed by David Cameron. Much about this worries me, even if we do need to encourage entrepreneurial spirits and there is certain logic to the plan. While not a Faustian pact, such initiatives give a very clear message about what we as a society value and maybe more importantly, research shows that encouraging business and money oriented attitudes create a likelihood that children’s more prosocial and generous character traits will be toned right down as self-interest and more instrumental motives become stronger.

The details of the initiative are that primary aged children will be given a fiver to start their own businesses, while plans are laid for an enterprise culture to sweep through secondary schools and universities, creating a generation of savvy money-makers. I am not against business or creative entrepreneurship but I have deep worries about what kind of human values such an emphasis on money and profit might be encouraging. Leaving aside what the idolisation of business and markets might have done in recent years to society, important research shows graphically how being exposed to market and monetary thinking turns off human traits that we should be valuing if we want a decent society and a remotely caring social fabric.

In one fascinating experiment [1] subjects were given words to re-arrange into sentences. Some had in front of them a random selection of words whereas others had similar ones but also some words linked with finance such as ‘profit’ or ‘high salary’. After this task they had to do a more complex puzzle, and they could both ask for and offer help. Those whose sentences comprised financial words were considerably less likely to ask for or offer help. Simply using financial words prods us to act more selfishly and self-reliantly.

In another experiment people were asked to play a game and told the rules. One

fiver challenge

group were informed that this was the 'Wall Street Game, while others knew it as 'The Community Game'. Amazingly 70% of those playing the 'Community Game' cooperated with each other, as opposed to only 33% playing the 'Wall Street Game', even though of course it was completely the same game [2].

We use different psychological and brain systems when working from market as opposed to social or relational values. Monetary thinking encourages self-interested, instrumental and less relational approaches to life. One recent study [3] showed that, while people mostly don't approve of practices such as child labour, land grabs or cruelty to animals, when induced into a monetary market mentality they are far more likely to override such principles. Those not in a market state of mind refused to accept money if this led to harm to an animal, but not so those in a market mind-set.

The world we live in is increasingly consumerist and money orientated and we should be worrying about this in relation to our children. Recent decades have witnessed a huge commercialisation of children's lives, as they are pressured to consume by a bombardment of advertising. American children apparently spend about 40 billion dollars each year and influence parental spending of about 700 billion dollars. Increasingly they prefer to shop online than play, according to Juliet Schor [4]. Nearly half of American youngsters dream 'a lot' about becoming rich, and more and more define themselves in terms of what they wear and look like, and think that money will make them happy. With such values come less altruistic or generous attitudes and behaviours.

The current vogue for rewarding kids does not help. Coaxing them into desired behaviours by bribes of pocket-money or

presents, or even gold-stars, immediately changes a child's motivations. We know from work in the Max Planck institute in Germany that toddlers as young as 16 months love to help adults, and will for example pick up and return dropped objects with glee and pleasure [5]. However when rewarded for this with things they simply don't help the next time. If the reward remains the love of helping, they do it time and time again. Being rewarded with money or an object, what psychologists call extrinsic rewards, takes away the real, intrinsic, reward, that warm glow we feel inside when we do something for another person

Helping others fires reward circuits in our brains, it makes us feel good. On the other hand doing something for an ulterior motive, such as a financial reward for an adult or a toy for a child, is just not as intrinsically rewarding. Recent studies of toddlers under two years old showed that they even felt happier when giving treats to others than when receiving them themselves. Not only that, they were happier if the gift was costly and they gave up some of their own resources for another person rather than giving a treat at no cost to themselves. What will Lord Young's initiative do to this character trait?

Similar research is endless. Blood donations often decrease when donors begin to be paid for them, for example [7]. The researcher Lara Aknin [8] suggests that money can indeed make us happy, but mainly if we spend it on other people! Looking at samples from 142 countries with very different levels of income, she found that irrespective of other factors, spending money on others predicted happiness.

And she found that the same is true for children [6]. It is worth remembering that helping others not only makes us feel

good, it also makes us healthier. One study showed that the more hours of community volunteer work undertaken the higher the psychological and physical health benefits [9]. Being helpful, like volunteering, even reduces mortality rates.

Of course we need our children to be creative and flexible and take initiative and even have the skills to turn a profit. But at a time when children's mental health is worse than ever according to most reports, we also must worry about the cost of raising mini Apprentice winners. Johnathon Swift said that a wise man should have money in his head but not in his heart. I think we should really be worrying what is in the hearts of our children, given the influences they are increasingly subjected to.

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NEWS & ISSUES

Police Vetting

The CYFs approvals team has expressed concern that some programmes are employing staff who have not been police vetted, or for whom they are not holding vetting forms.

If you employ staff, even on a temporary, casual, or emergency basis, you must be able to show that they have been police vetted. In an emergency situation, where you just have to get someone at short notice, they still have to have been vetted, but if another agency has done this, you can obtain the documents later – with permission from the employee and the other agency.

You need to have on file the relevant documents for everyone who works in your programme, and be able to produce them if asked.

If you are not sure about vetting, the following is quoted from the OSCAR Standards for approval and provider guidelines.

Reference checks

Reference checks must be carried out prior to employment and kept on file. Services must complete at least two reference checks to consider the maturity, experience and training of the person being employed.

Police vetting

For the purpose of OSCAR approval, Police vetting must only be carried out by the Police Licensing and Vetting Service Centre.

Police vetting is required for all staff and managers directly employed in the OSCAR programme or employed by the provider in any capacity, who have access to the children or the children's information. This includes staff on the site such as caretakers, gardeners, cooks and administration staff.

Compliance with the standards precludes the employment of any person in a paid or voluntary capacity, including those in management positions, who has a conviction for sexual crimes or for any offence involving the harm or exploitation of children.

Vetting is repeated at least every three years. Child, Youth and Family assessors

will look at the vetting information. Vetting reports must be kept on file for OSCAR approval audit purposes and destroyed when they are updated.

Those under the age of 17 years cannot be police vetted; however, services can still employ staff aged under 17 years as long as they have been reference checked.

It is expected that vetting is carried out prior to appointment of an employee or volunteer. When this cannot happen, a provisional appointment can be made as long as vetting is completed as soon as possible.

- All employees are to be police vetted.
- Staff under 17 years and volunteers who are not vetted must be supervised at all times.

Credit Cards

Many community organisations have credit cards for key staff members and to be able to make online purchases. This saves the staff member having to advance money for expenditure while travelling for the organisation, and it also gives extra flexibility to respond to short-term discounts (the 'today-only, never-to-be-repeated' offer).

There are two principal ways to account for credit card expenditure:

1.) Treat the card account like any other bank account.

This system works especially well if you have accounting software with a live (or imported) bank feed. You simply code and reconcile transactions as for the other bank accounts. Unfortunately, bank feeds for credit cards are often error-prone in both Xero and MYOB.

2.) Treat the credit card statement as a bill.

Rather than running a separate ledger for the credit card, you can also simply code each monthly credit card statement as an expense (split into different categories). This is usually the easier way, but there are two issues to be aware of: a) if you do accrual accounting, an end-of-year adjustment will be required for any as-yet unpaid amounts and b) you will likely become confused when you transfer money to your credit

card (for example to load it up for expected expenditure which exceeds your credit limit).

Because credit cards circumvent the two-signatory rule it is important that a credit card holder is barred from making inter-account transfers. This would enable them to load the card up beyond their normal spending limit and bypass your other internal safety mechanisms. Many organisations allow transfers between their bank accounts to be authorised by only one person, which can create a loophole.

Some organisations, who may not qualify for a Credit Card (or be uncomfortable with one), set up a second transactions bank account with an eftpos card. The same safeguards need to be applied as for credit cards (i.e. no inter-account transfers).

Accounting Standards Update

The most common questions we are asked about the standards at the moment are a) whether organisations need to change their day-to-day bookkeeping, and b) from when they have to comply. Our advice at the moment is:

a) Do not change your day-to-day bookkeeping or accounting system. The Standards refer to the presentation of your accounts (and some other information) only, they do not mandate how you do things for your own purposes. Your financial systems needs to meet your internal needs first, and external reporting needs second.

b) The first reports required in the new format are for those organisations with a financial year ending 31 March 2016. If your financial year ends in June or December, it will be June 2016 or December 2016. For those with financial years ending in January or February (some sports clubs and others), you will not be required to report under the new format before January/February 2017. There is little you could or should do before those dates.

Organisations may also want to re-consider whether the benefits of Charities registration outweigh the additional compliance burden in their particular case, and possibly seek advice on this. The key benefit of registration, income tax exemption, is also available for non-registered not-for-profits under certain conditions, and most funders do not insist on Charities registration at this point in time.

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT TRAGIC EVENTS IN THE NEWS

The world can be a scary place. Tragedies occur that affect us all and these awful things can undermine confidence and lead to anxieties and fears that are potentially unhealthy, for both adults and children.

For our children to flourish and thrive, they need to believe that the world is a safe and predictable place. Or to be more precise, that their world is a safe and predictable place.

When our children come to us with questions about these almost unspeakable events, our natural reaction is to spill the beans and tell our children everything. We get very logical. We step into lecture mode. After all, that's what parents do. We give them answers. Not all parents go with this approach. Some parents sugar-coat the answers while others prefer a direct response. Others lie outright.

And of course if we are affected by what we read, hear, or see, and our children see how we are affected, they can also be affected. Our emotions are contagious. Our fears become our children's fears. Our anxieties become theirs.

Curiosity or concern?

It is natural that our children will have questions. It is healthy. Particularly when they see us being affected by such news. It is important, even before we start answering, however, that we understand why our child is asking such questions.

What typically underlies our children's questions is a mixture of two things: curiosity, and concern.

Curiosity

We satisfy our children's curiosity with

brief, honest answers. For example, we may suggest:

"Sometimes people do terrible things and it leaves lots of people hurt. It upsets me that these bad things happen sometimes."

We want to be sure our children understand that these are rare events. Most people are safe all day every day. These responses will usually satisfy younger children. Older children may follow up with more complex questions. I'll address how we can respond to those questions in a moment.

Concern

We satisfy concern with something altogether more important: understanding, compassion, and empathy. Our children are asking these questions as much out of a desire to understand as a desire for reassurance. They want to know that even if the world is unsafe and unpredictable, their world is safe and predictable.

We might satisfy their concern with responses like:

"Hearing those things makes us feel awful doesn't it. It makes you wonder how such bad things can happen."

"It can be so hard to understand what went wrong."

"Don't you wish these awful things didn't happen? Like if there was some special super-hero who got rid of all the bad guys and saved everyone from harm."

These responses tap into the emotions our children are feeling. We show them we understand. We help them feel that even if the world isn't safe all the time, their world

can be because we are there for them and we know how they feel.

Does this mean we should shelter our children?

While our children are young I recommend sheltering them from these tragic stories as much as possible. The truth is that our young children don't need to know that men kill their wives that parents kill their children, or that planes get shot down. They don't need to know that some countries try to blow up people in other countries. All this information will do is under-mine their feelings of safety, and impact on their confidence. (I would argue that nobody really needs to know this stuff! It affects us all.)

In all reality, most children under around age 10 (or thereabouts) will not be particularly interested, so the cocooning I'm recommending will not be particularly difficult. Just keep the news switched off. And offer empathy if they are exposed to disturbing news or images.

But what if they ask harder questions?

Sometimes our hugs, empathy, and reassurance may not be enough. Additionally, older children are likely to have harder questions about these incidents. But whether children are young or old, the advice about responding to questions remains the same:

- Be honest
- Answer questions briefly and directly
- Avoid sugar-coating
- Don't give more detail than is appropriate
- Be guided by your children's curiosity and then stop. Avoid oversharing.

It would be wonderful if we never had to have these conversations because we lived in a world where these things didn't happen. Sadly, bad things do happen and those things can affect how we and our children respond to the world. Ultimately, it's our job to guide our children in age appropriate ways through these hard questions about horrible things. But remember, our children don't need to be told they're safe. They need to feel safe.

Justin Coulson

Relationship - based practices

As adults build positive relationships with children, their potential influence on children's behaviour grows significantly – that is, children notice responsive, caring adults. Children pay particular attention to what such a teacher says and does, and they seek out ways to ensure even more positive attention from the teacher (*Fox et al. 2003, p.2*).

This review has demonstrated that child development is relationship dependent. All aspects of a child's social, emotional and even physical development rely on the quality of relationship he has with the adults in his life. For many children, early learning services and schools connect them to the community outside of their home and enhance their opportunities directly through education and indirectly through supporting parents in their efforts to meet their child's needs.

Trauma-sensitive approaches acknowledge that children also learn about relationships from observing those around them – the relationships between staff, with staff and parents, between staff and children.

Providing clear communication with families, treating each child and family as unique, keeping staff changes and turnover to a minimum and including families in the community of the school/service help to contribute to an effective relationship.

Robinson (2008, p.5) argues that for adults to respond appropriately to children's behaviours they need to know:

- the child's history
- the developmental capacity of the child to understand and manage their own emotions
- the meaning of a particular context for the child
- their own role as an adult in containing the child's feelings.

It is not always possible to know all of a child's history. However it is important to understand what may be impacting on the

child's behaviour, or the behaviour may be misunderstood and therefore mismanaged (*Perry 2002*). Educators working with very young children need to provide relationship-based care that approximates that provided by an attuned parent.

Older children and their families need strategies tailored to the developmental capacity (not just chronological age) of the child. Strategies designed to enhance parent-child attachment are readily able to be adapted to the educational setting, where educators become a secondary attachment figure and provide a secure base for learning. The advice to parents in the Circle of Security program (*Cooper et al. 2000*) is sound advice to an early educator too – always be Bigger, Stronger, Wiser and Kind. If these qualities are always present and practised in an integrated manner, the relationship between the educator and child can grow to provide a base for learning and development.

Relationship repair

Central to this approach is the notion of relationship repair, where children and educators will have times of 'getting it wrong' or 'being out of synch' and it is essential for children that these inevitable times are followed by a process that rebuilds and repairs the relationship. The Circle of Security approach suggests some helpful steps after an incident of problem behaviour, based on understanding that it is the relationship that will assist a child to learn and develop, and it is the educator's task to take the lead:

- Stay calm or take time out to get calm.
- Calm the child. Stay connected to the child until she is calm – where possible practice 'time in', not 'time out'. Help the child organise their feelings by acknowledging and expressing feelings e.g. 'Are you sad/afraid/angry?', 'When you did that I felt...'
- Repair the relationship. Talk about what happened in a non-blaming way. Plan for what will happen next time. (*Cassidy et al. 2000*).

TOP TEN TIPS FOR PRIVACY

1. Think before you give out personal information, and ask what it will be used for.
2. You can ask to see any personal information held about you. If it's wrong, ask for it to be corrected.
3. Don't like people trying to sell you things by mail or over the phone? You can contact the Marketing Association (0800 347 328) to ask about its Name Removal Service. Or visit their website and click on Do Not Call Register and Do Not Mail Register or phone 0800 222 332.
4. Help keep your kids safe online by encouraging them to talk to you about what they're doing.
5. Protect yourself from identity theft by ripping up your personal letters and bills, and putting different bits in separate rubbish bins. Even better - use a shredder.
6. Limit your risk when buying online. Have a separate, low-limit credit card.
7. Posting personal information on the internet? Use a nickname if you can.
8. Check security procedures in internet cafés and make sure you log out before you leave.
9. Get a free copy of your credit record once a year to check that nobody is applying for credit in your name. Visit www.mycreditfile.co.nz or www.dnb.co.nz for details.
10. Make sure you've got up-to-date safety software on your computer, especially if you're doing banking online.



www.jackhagley.com
Source: <http://www.100people.org>

OSCAR NETWORK TRAINING AND EVENT CALENDAR TERM 1 2015

EVENT/TRAINING	DATE	TIME & PLACE	COST (GST INCLUDED)
Health & Safety	Wednesday 25 February	9.30am - 12 noon Venue to be advised	\$35 members \$90 non-members
Full & Refresher First Aid MediTrain CYF approved	Saturday 28 February	Full: 8.30am - 4.30pm Refresher 8.30am - 12.30pm St Columbus Parish Centre 452 Main South Rd, Hornby	Full: \$175 Refresher: \$98
New to OSCAR	Wednesday 11 March	6.00pm - 8.30pm OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street Addington	\$35 members \$90 non-members
Child Protection	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	\$35 members \$90 non-members
Networking Meeting (formally known as cluster meetings)	Wednesday 25 March	10am - 11.30 Venue to be announced	FREE

Please don't let cost be a barrier to staff attending - contact pam@oscornetwork.org.nz for staff sponsorship

THE OSCAR NETWORK WILL CLOSE ON FRIDAY 19 DECEMBER
AND REOPEN ON MONDAY 12 JANUARY 2015

THE TREASURE TROVE TRUST WILL CLOSE ON 19 DECEMBER
AND REOPEN ON WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY 2015

CREATIVE JUNK WILL CLOSE 1PM SATURDAY 20 DECEMBER
AND REOPEN AT 11AM ON WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY 2015

