



Teach our parents well

Ko tētahi mahi mea momoho rawa, he wero hoki, ko te mātuatanga. Parenting is one of the most rewarding and challenging jobs there is (www.plunket.org.nz). LAREE TAULA works with the Early Childhood Council, and looks across the landscape of parenting initiatives.

I have often heard the term, “If only there was a manual for raising children.” Do we now have too many manuals? There is no doubt parenting can be a stressful task. Throw a lack of financial resources in to the mix and the family structure comes under increasing strain.

If we are to help New Zealand families and give them the support they need, how can we do this in a co-ordinated way and make it easier for parents’ to know what support is available?

And if we were to describe the characteristics of the group of people in New Zealand needing the most help, who would they be?

All families can do with positive affirmation and inspiration to nurture and grow a strong family unit, and each family is unique. For this reason, tailored parenting programmes make sense. In this article we have compiled a comprehensive list of some of the key parenting programmes available. See pages 22 and 23.

The contribution a quality early childhood education experience has to make, alongside an environment where parents can perform to their optimum ability towards life-long positive outcomes for children, cannot be underestimated.

Parents and success

Research continues to highlight the importance of parents in ECE and school success. Children’s Commissioner and paediatrician Dr Russell Wills says 270,000 children in New Zealand - about 25% - live in poverty.

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He says, “Child poverty imposes costs. It harms the children directly affected and our wider society. It reduces the opportunity for children to develop their talents. It undermines their rights. It stifles educational achievement, reduces labour productivity and earnings ability, and increases the costs of health care and crime. A failure to address child poverty now will damage the nation’s long term prosperity.”

Dr Wills has just released a working paper, ‘Parents’, Families’ and Whanau Contributions to Educational Success’. The research compiled for the paper concludes the need to think broadly about education and this includes thinking outside existing institutional frameworks.

An area deserving more attention is the impact parents, families and whanau can have. The paper describes parenting behaviours and attitudes that have major impacts on a child’s development and educational outcomes, and

that parenting behaviour can mitigate some of the effects of poverty and disadvantage on education success.

It recommends a good approach is to start early in a child’s life, to be strengths-based and to recognise the expertise of parents and whanau.

Encouragement for Positive Family Dynamics

In October I attended a dynamic parenting evening tailored for Pacific families, at the Porirua Elim Christian Centre.

Nick and Vasa, a married couple with three grown daughters, presented using an analogy of a table with four legs. That for a child to move through life successfully, they need each four legs of the table to be strong.

These are:

- Education, Employment
- Community, Church, Culture
- Family
- Friends

Nick drew strongly from his 20 plus years’ serving in the criminal justice system as a Policeman. He spoke about the travesty of the many Pacific youth he saw, with so much potential, who had made unwise decisions they deeply regretted later.

Nick and Vasa both saw a strong need to develop a parenting programme from a contemporary Pacific perspective. Their programme is offered as part of the suite of parenting programmes available through The Parenting Place.

ECE sector at a glance

New Zealand's early childhood service provision is complex and reflects parental choice over time. This has led to fragmentation and competitive behaviour at some levels.

There is a growing awareness now about the importance of early learning and parents are increasingly choosing an ECE option that will prepare their child well for school. There are:

- 4,275 licensed ECE services, of which there are 2,327 childcare centres
- 15,287 qualified teachers working in the sector
- 196,535 children aged between 0 and 5 inclusive enrolled in some level of licensed ECE as at Dec 2012.

Government's ECE participation objectives

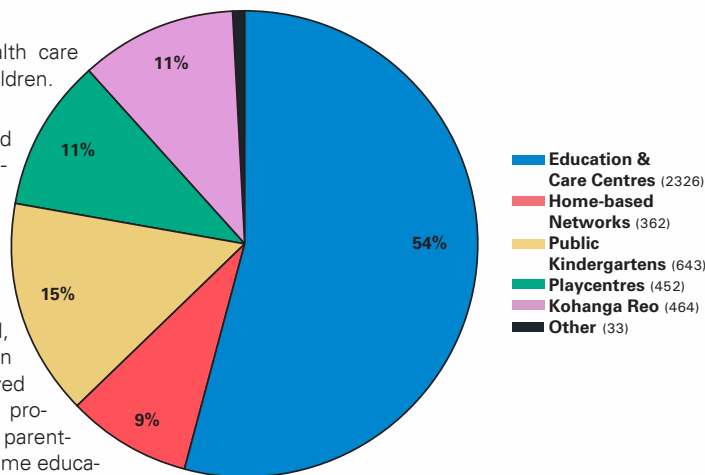
New Zealand's welfare system changed significantly in July this year, making it compulsory for anyone on a benefit with dependent children to meet some social

obligations around the health care and education of their children.

These include:

- All children are enrolled with a General Practitioner (GP) or with a medical centre that belongs to a Primary Health Organisation
- From the age of three until they start school, children are enrolled in and attending an approved early childhood education programme, or an approved parenting and early childhood home education programme
- Children under five are up to date with core Well Child/Tamariki Ora checks.

With the Government's target of 98% of all children participating in an ECE option by 2016, alongside the welfare reforms, the focus on early childhood education has never had such emphasis.



ECE provision in New Zealand does not come cheap. The total ECE government budget in 2013 is \$1.5 billion.

Budget committed an extra \$172.5 million over four years in new investment for ECE. \$80.5 million of this will go towards the Better Public Services

CONTINUES PAGE 24

Working with health and social services

There are a range of scenarios that outline an opportunity for the plethora of social services available to children and their families, to be linked through an early childhood centre. Epidemics such as hand, foot and mouth disease and whooping cough, immunisation,

school readiness, incidences of rheumatic fever, and parental practices impacting on health, i.e unsafe practices and poor dietary habits, all point to the ECE network to be better used to impart positive health messages.

Every child counts

Every Child Counts has recently announced an Inquiry into engaging parents in the education of their children. Submissions closed on November 7 2013.

The terms of reference for the inquiry are to investigate the elements of an effective strategy for engaging parents, families, whanau, aiga, and communities in education; to identify the best practice examples of approaches, locally and internationally, that support parents and communities to encourage their children's learning; and to identify ways to leverage the strength of communities to lift the educational achievement of children and young people in their community. Every Child Counts advocates for the policies, practice and attitudes that enable children to thrive.

They are a coalition of organisations and individuals working to increase the status and wellbeing of New Zealand children, led by Barnardos, Plunket, UNICEF, Save the Children and Mana Ririki.

Links

- www.parliament.nz/en-nz/pb/sc/make-submission/50SCES_SCF_00DBSCH_INQ_12466_1/inquiry-into-engaging-parents-in-the-education-of-their
- www.everychildcounts.org.nz
- www.facebook.com/pages/Every-Child-Counts/102667329775560



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Parenting programmes available now

This list is to provide a snapshot of the main parenting programmes offered in New Zealand. It is not a comprehensive list of every parenting programme available.

Family Start (MSD)

Family Start is a programme for families/whānau who are struggling with challenges that may make it harder for them to care for their baby or young child.

A parent can start when they are three months pregnant, but referrals are taken up until the baby is one year old. It is voluntary. Family Start assists parents who identify with any of the following:

- mental health issues
- drinking, using drugs or gambling too much
- abuse when you were a child
- serious problems with your partner or family/whānau
- don't know how to make sure your child is healthy and growing strong
- your child has a disability or needs special care
- Child Youth and Family are or have been involved with your family/whānau
- a young parent with other challenges and need extra support

www.familyservices.govt.nz/working-with-us/programmes-services/early-intervention/new-family-start/how-family-start-works.html

Family Service Centres

These are one-stop-shops for families in low-income communities. Their core services can include pre-school centres, child and family services, Plunket and HIPPY. A variety of other services are offered, according to the individual centre. These include Social Workers in Schools, parenting education and other educational opportunities for adults and children. Specific assistance to parents include:

- Develop skills and abilities appropriate to the child's developmental age
- Increase the numbers of Maori and Pacific children taking part in early childhood education
- Help those with special needs receive a better education
- Improve home/early childhood centre and home/school relationships
- Increase the vaccination rates of children under five
- Increase the number of children receiving "well child checks"
- Encourage parents and children to adopt healthy lifestyles
- Reduce the incidence of child abuse and family breakdown
- Increase parents' and children's access to and use of existing services

www.familyservices.govt.nz/working-with-us/programmes-services/early-intervention/family-services-centres.html

Home Interaction Programme for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)

HIPPY is a two-year home-based parenting and early childhood enrichment programme that builds the confidence and skills of parents to create a positive learning environment through which to prepare their four and five year old child for school.

HIPPY understands the critical role parents play in their children's education. The programme builds on the bond between parents and children while supporting parents as they provide their children with the necessary skills and confidence to begin school with a positive attitude toward learning.

HIPPY is specifically designed for parents who may not feel

comfortable in their abilities to teach their children. Parents and children work together for fifteen minutes a day with storybooks, puzzles and learning games that help children to become successful learners.

Participation in the programme also offers some parents a supported pathway to further study, employment and local community leadership.

Currently there are 32 programmes operating in low-income communities around the country, this includes six new sites that have opened their doors in 2012. The New Zealand Government has committed to the expansion of the HIPPY programme over the next four years, which will see the opening of a further 13 sites by 2015, to bring the total number of HIPPY programmes to 45 across New Zealand.

www.familyservices.govt.nz/working-with-us/programmes-services/early-intervention/home-interaction-programme-for-parents-and-youngsters.html

Incredible Years

Incredible Years is a 14-18-session programme for parents of children aged 3-8, which helps parents turn behaviour around and create an enjoyable and harmonious family life.

Parents come together each week and develop approaches to use at home with problem behaviours, such as aggressiveness, ongoing tantrums and acting out behaviour, such as swearing, whining, yelling, hitting and kicking, answering back and refusing to follow rules.

Parents are coached in:

- making time to play and spend time with their children and letting their children lead the play
- encouraging the behaviours they would like to see, through setting clear rules and boundaries and using praise and encouragement
- selectively using consequences such as ignoring, loss of privilege and time out.
- The programme is provided by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and by contracted Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).

<http://incredibleyears.com>

www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Special-Education/OurWorkProgramme/PositiveBehaviourForLearning/ProgrammesForParents.aspx

Parents As First Teachers (PAFT)

PAFT is based on the philosophy that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. In New Zealand, PAFT is funded by the government and administered by Family and Community Services group within MSD. PAFT is a programme that enables families with young children to access free, practical support and guidance. Enrolment criteria may apply. This support lasts from before birth to 3 years. The aim of the PAFT programme is to help parents to participate more effectively in their children's early development and learning. PAFT can help families to:

- understand how their child grows and develops
- encourage their child's growth and development
- ensure their child's safety and well being ▷



- gain confidence in their parenting skills
- get the support and professional assistance they may need for their child's health and development.
- PAFT can help a child:
- develop good language skills
- increase their ability to problem solve
- develop social skills
- have any potential health and learning problems detected.

www.familyservices.govt.nz/working-with-us/programmes-services/positive-parenting/paft/index.html

Partnering with Parents

Partnering with Parents is an early-childhood-centre-based programme led by the Early Childhood Council in partnership with the Ministry of Social Services and Development's Strategies with Kids Information for Parents' (SKIP) team, and Plunket. It brings together parents, health professionals and others to answer the question: 'How can we best work together to support the children we all care for?'

The project involves a series of three workshops offered through participating childcare centres lead by Plunket-trained facilitators. One of these three sessions is attended by teachers only and two sessions involve both teachers and parents.

A fully facilitated Partnering with Parents programme is made up of three 1.5 hour workshops that involve:

- the identification of parental issues,
- opportunity for professionals listening to parents, and vice versa
- the formation, by health, education and other professionals, of responses to parental issues,
- the development of plans to strengthen and maintain the relationships between all parties,

- parenting education and support as needed.

Sessions will usually start with a 10-15 minute education spot chosen in consultation between facilitators and centres. For example, if toilet training, dietary advice, positive discipline or brain development is an issue or topic of interest, that will form the starting topic and centres will advertise the sessions accordingly to attract parental attendance. All facilitators carry out a process where participants 'walk in each other's shoes', and facilitators use an attitude questionnaire to help/support staff identify their strengths and weaknesses/areas for further development in relating to parents.

Upon completion of all three sessions, the facilitator will assist in the development of a plan for centres to strengthen and maintain the relationships between all parties and link parents up with further parenting education and support as needed.

www.ecc.org.nz/

Parenting Education Programme (PEPE)

PEPE is a Plunket-developed national programme which consists of a series of five courses, aimed at supporting parents in their parenting role through the different stages of their child's early development.

All PEPE courses are designed to support parents in their parenting role, build parent confidence, and connect parents with other parents and local support and resources in their area.

Currently the PEPE programme consists of a series of five courses, free to all participants:

- Your New Baby – Parenting in the first six weeks
- Your Growing Baby - Parenting from 6 weeks until baby is rolling or crawling
- Your Moving Baby - Parenting when baby is moving but not

- yet walking
- Your Active Toddler – Parenting from around 14 months to around 2.5 years
- Your Curious Young Child – Parenting from 2.5 years until your child is at school.

www.plunket.org.nz/what-we-do/what-we-offer/parenting-education/parenting-education-programme-pepe/

Toolbox Parenting Groups

Toolbox Parenting Groups, delivered by The Parenting Place, are designed to provide inspiration and advice for wherever you are on your parenting journey. The vision is to positively impact every family. There are a wide variety of programmes and resources that reach a broad cross section of New Zealand families. Toolbox Parenting Groups are made up of small group courses with a trained facilitator, six sessions per course tailored to your needs including Maori and Pasifika families. Toolbox courses are free to foster carers, whanau caregivers, adopters, grandparents raising grandchildren, and Home for Life Parents.

www.theparentingplace.com/0800 53 56 59

SPACE Programme

The SPACE programme administered by SPACE NZ Trust is aimed mainly at first time parents and their babies, and has been designed to support parents through the first year of their child's developmental journey. The programme runs weekly for 3-4 terms (i.e. 30-40 weeks). The sessions are run by facilitators who have knowledge, experience, and training in early childhood care and education. Infants join the SPACE programme around 0-3 months of age. There may be opportunities for older babies to join in with an existing SPACE session depend-

ing on the availability of places. The SPACE sessions are held at a Playcentre, or at suitable community venues. The centre/venue is set up to encourage interactions between the parents, babies, and facilitators.

<http://www.space.org.nz/>

Teen Parent Initiatives

Services for teen parents aim to improve the health, development, education and welfare of teenage parents and their children. These initiatives include; Teen Parent Intensive Case Workers, supported by Volunteer Neighbourhood Supporters and Parenting Support for Teen Fathers.

www.familyservices.govt.nz/working-with-us/programmes-services/early-intervention/teen-parent-initiatives.html

Triple P

Triple P is a parenting and family support strategy that aims to prevent severe behavioural, emotional and developmental problems in children by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents. And because Triple P is designed and tailored to the needs of parents, you can select one of the many levels of Triple P suited to the specific needs of your organisation and/or clients. The Triple P-Positive Parenting Program is a multi-level, parenting and family support strategy. Triple P aims to prevent behavioural, emotional and developmental problems in children by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents. The system was developed by Professor Matt Sanders and colleagues from the Parenting and Family Support Centre in the School of Psychology at The University of Queensland.

www.triplep.net/glo-en/home

FROM PAGE 21

target of 98% ECE participation by 2016. The overall rate is 95.7%. Maori are 92.3%, Pasifika are at 88.6%.

What makes a child vulnerable?

In 2011 the Early Childhood Council (ECC) conducted a survey of its members and asked: What circumstances, in your experience, make some children particularly vulnerable, given that all children are vulnerable to a degree. They could tick more than one box. The ECC represents more than half of all centre based ECE services in the country. These include 1,100 ECE centres with a mixture of characters and philosophical bases such as Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, Reggio Emilia, Christian, Pasifika, Maori and some with no particular philosophy.

- Almost 90% of respondents said it was lack of parenting support,
- 73.83% said it was drug and or alcohol abuse in the home,
- 71.96% said it was low income in the home, and
- 64% said it was low parental education levels.
- When asked what could be done to protect vulnerable children.
- 86.2% said provide parent support,
- 82% said link the family with support services,
- 64% said provide parent education and
- 39% said teach resilience.

The Early Childhood Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Services and Development's Strategies with Kids Information for Parents' (SKIP) team, and Plunket, came up with the Partnering with Parents model to

bring families/whanau, early childhood centre staff, health professionals and family support workers to answer the question, 'How can we best work together to support the children we all care for?'

Embedded into the Partnering with Parents philosophy is the belief that we need more confident parents, not ones who feel their experience or knowledge is inferior; that the family is the most important support group for the child and that the child learns best when their family and teachers work in partnership to support the child's developmental learning. It was decided that the ECE network could be better used to positively engage with parents across a wide spectrum and that ECE centres would be viewed as places of commonality and support.

Vulnerable Children Bill

The Vulnerable Children Bill was introduced to Parliament on September 17 and referred to the Social Services Select Committee. Submissions closed on 30 October 30 2013.

The objectives of this Bill are to:

- reinforce the need for shared responsibility, and co-ordinated and collaborative action across the government social services sector to better protect vulnerable children; and
- help ensure children are safe with those that work with them; and
- minimise the risk of future harm posed by those who have abused children in the past, including ensuring the safety of children of adults who have previously had a child or young person permanently removed from their care due to abuse or neglect or where the adult has been convicted of the murder, manslaughter, or infanticide of a child or young person in his or her care; and
- enhance the response to children who have already been abused or neglected to increase their chances of better long-term outcomes.

The final outcome of the bill will have important implications for the ECE sector. These include child protection policies to support staff to identify and report child abuse and neglect. Employees in the state services and in organisations funded by any of the state services, who come into regular contact with children through their work will need to be safety checked.

Safety checking will involve:

- Identity verification – proof people are who they say, including former identities.
- Information requirements – thorough Police, records, history and behaviour checks.
- Risk assessments – to assess the risk the person will pose to the safety of children if employed.
- Periodic re-assessment – every three years.

As part of the implementation of the wider Children's Action Plan, ECE staff will be given new tools and systems available to make this easier and to help them feel more confident about spotting vulnerability and abuse, and know who to talk to about it.

With questions regarding how these measures affect ECE services, email: childrens.actionplan@minedu.govt.nz

LINKS

- 'Parents', Families' and Whanau Contributions to Educational Success' summary report click here. www.occ.org.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/10512/130703_FINAL_WP_Parents_family_and_whanau_contributions_summary.pdf
- A report compiled by the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, Sir Peter Gluckman, 2011, 'Improving the Transition, Reducing Social and Psychological Morbidity During Adolescence, Chapter 2: Social and emotional competence: intervening in infancy. Pages 35-48.
- www.pmcas.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Improving-the-Transition-report.pdf
- An Agenda For Amazing Children – Final Report to the ECE Taskforce, 2011. www.taskforce.ece.govt.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Final_Report_ECE_Taskforce.pdf
- The importance of the first three years of a child's life, brochure from the Brainwave Trust. www.brainwave.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/PamphletDLE09-VWeb.pdf
- www.familyservices.govt.nz/skip/
- www.plunket.org.nz/
- www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/For-Early-Childhood-Services-and-Nga-Kohanga-Reo/ERO-Reviews-of-Early-Childhood-Services
- www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process
- Family and Community Engagement Simulation http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/center/pfce_simulation
- www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Special-Education/OurWorkProgramme/PositiveBehaviourForLearning.aspx
- Vulnerable Children Bill - www.parliament.nz/en-nz/pb/legislation/bills/00DBHOH_BILL12424_1/vulnerable-children-bill
- Information about the Vulnerable Children Bill. www.childrens-actionplan.govt.nz
- A Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for the Vulnerable Children Bill - www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/PublicationsAndResources/RIS/SafeguardingChildrensWorkforce.aspx
- Guidance on looking out for at risk children and families, including recognising potential child abuse is available at: www.cyf.govt.nz/keeping-kids-safe/if-you-are-worried/looking-out-for-at-risk-children-and-families.html