

NEW BEGINNINGS PRESCHOOL
Ngā Timatanga Hou

New Beginnings Preschool is a community based, and run service and is situated in Linwood, Christchurch. Linwood has a New Zealand Deprivation Index Rating of 10, or alternatively is within a school area with a decile rating of 2.

96% of our income comes from Ministry of Education and WINZ funding.

Our centre philosophy is underpinned by the intention of every child being nurtured to become an empowered citizen of our community and as they continue on their journey to school. We therefore have a strong focus on positive guidance and social competence and to support this we have developed an intervention model which weaves an understanding of how children's brains develop alongside the curriculum document for Early Childhood Education, Te Whāriki.

The power of the work we do is working together with our whānau within a collaborative partnership to achieve the best outcomes for their child, and their whānau.

The New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum document Te Whāriki is a comprehensive document weaving together the principles of:- family and community; relationships; empowerment; and holistic development with the strands of:- belonging, wellbeing, exploration, communication and contribution. and I quote, 'The term "curriculum" is used in this document to describe the sum total of the experiences, activities and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development'. (Te Whāriki, 1996) At New Beginnings the early childhood curriculum document supports all that we do and be, as a team, with and for children, and as a community.

The following statements are from our Centres Philosophy Statement and illustrate the thinking and values which underpin our team and centre ethos and professional practice:-

We have high expectations of the way we will behave as teachers and we have the same high expectation of children. We expect and nurture manaakitanga (respect and caring for one another).

We believe that practicing 'ata haere' (slowing down) and consciously creating a peaceful environment allows us to truly hear and see children. Our peaceful environment also supports children to emotionally regulate themselves and allows them to truly 'BE' and develop at their own pace.

A child is always observed through a credit lens which means that we are always looking at a child very positively, recognising their strengths and their wairua. However we also notice areas where we can support a child to develop to their full potential and we work this into our assessment and planning.

Our safe and peaceful environment of well being and belonging is a place for all of our community to be learners/'ākonga', and grow. At New Beginnings (Ngā Timatanga Hou), we use Bruce Perry's neuro sequential model to support the work we do with children. We consciously provide a programme with emphasis on developing the limbic system (emotional brain) and pathways between the limbic system and the cortex (thinking brain) to support the development of emotional intelligence within children. This is especially evident in the hui' (meetings) our older children initiate as a tool to support their social world and self-empowerment.

please refer to www.ero.govt.nz for a copy of our latest ERO report – New Beginnings Preschool Incorporated – Christchurch – May 2010

THE IMPLICATIONS OF GOVERNMENT CUTS TO FUNDING

The fiscal decision on the 20th of May of removing the top two funding bands for early childhood funding places enormous stress on the framework that supports the philosophy of our service and therefore quality outcomes for the children that attend, and our community. The implications of this decision threatens to extinguish quality outcomes for our children and therefore the community that we serve.

We expect to lose \$80,000 dollars per annum in income based on the 1st of February 2011 funding rates, this is almost 15% of our annual income. We are not able to pass on this cost to our parents!

As a service we have had to make cut backs in the following areas to ensure we will remain financially viable.

- * We have reduced our costs with our grocery bill by looking at our morning and afternoon teas. In doing this the nutritional benefit for children attending is diminished.
- * Natural attrition - we are being wise about filling positions from resignations.
- * We are looking at the age groups for next year and analysing where we will lose the least amount of money and at this stage the 20 hours funding for 3&4yr olds and the under two funding is where we will lose the least.

- * We have had to raise our fees whilst considering the fine line between what is affordable, and what is not for our families.

In 2009 to remain financially viable even at 100% funding we had reduced the number of weeks we were closed at Christmas time from four weeks to two.

As a centre we currently achieve 100% funding and this has been necessary to fund the quality outcomes for children we achieve. The current publicity around 100% funding seems to suggest that it has been an optional extra for centres, this may be the case for centres whose communities are able to absorb the cost of higher fees. For communities where parents are on low incomes it has NOT been an optional extra, it has been NECESSARY to fund the continued operation of the centre to support our community's needs.

As a service we have very few options to absorb the funding cuts as 96% of our funding comes from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development.

I have a team of committed and passionate teachers who every day dedicate themselves to working to the highest professional standards to support quality outcomes. We do operate at higher ratios and this supports us to achieve excellent outcomes for children. It is important to note that I have presented on the work we do at New Beginnings, in particular at the Early Intervention National conference in 2009 illustrating how our unique work supports children of moderate developmental needs. I find it unbelievable that we are being asked to completely minimise the quality of programme we offer our children and our community. I include our community because of the depth of work we do working in partnership with our families.

The effects of these cuts have potentially far reaching consequences for our community.

With this decision the Government are penalising and diminishing the work of early childhood services who have had the integrity to work towards excellent outcomes with 100% trained and registered teachers for children, but in this instance I refer to our service.

Children in New Zealand should be able to depend on the adults of our nation advocating for them, and children's wellbeing should be at the forefront of any policy that impacts on them.

Parent Case Study

23.8.10

New Beginnings Preschool is situated in a low income area. This means, in a real and practical way that there is not a lot of spare money available for extra fees, fundraising or even sometimes the necessities of life.

The cutbacks needed to counter the drop in funding have been minimised by the wonderful team of staff, meaning that they are absorbing all the stress and worry of change without letting that affect the children. In a low decile area the job of teaching, guiding and nurturing these often challenging children is hard enough, without expecting the changes that they have had to make.

A concern for me has been that changes made to morning and afternoon tea. Hungry children are disruptive and unresponsive as every parent knows. I am aware that some of our children come to preschool hungry and often don't have a nutritious evening meal for whatever reason. While it is not our job to provide meals, it makes the behaviour and therefore the environment for both children and staff peaceful and calm when everyone has full tummies. I know that the team at New Beginnings has worked hard to make a safe, nurturing and calm environment for our children. It is a preschool that is well known and respected by many professionals that care for, and educate children. We would like to think that this can continue, but funding cuts make everything a little bit harder. Without places like New Beginnings the future of children in low decile areas is at risk. These children grow up into members of our society. The power is in your hands to decide if they are to be useful ones or not.

Susanne Compton

Parent

NEW BEGINNINGS PRESCHOOL

31st August 2010

The National Government's 2010 budget cuts to Early Childhood Education only affirms to me National's unwillingness to protect and better New Zealand's Education system.

The 80% funding bracket ensures 20% less quality in lower socio-economic centres because of the inability of these centres to pass on the cost of cuts to families.

New Zealand is facing extremely difficult financial times with unemployment being high and not enough jobs for those seeking employment. I understand our Government has hard choices to make but cutting into the Education sector (and Health sector) is short sighted and only leads to more financial hardship in the future for our country.

Lisa Dower

Mum and Treasurer

for New Beginnings Preschool