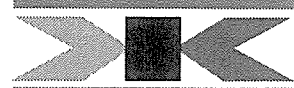


Te Manu Hou ✦ Kindergartens Matter

Quarterly Newsletter of New Zealand Kindergartens Inc

No 1 ✦ June 2000

NEW ZEALAND



Kindergartens Inc
Te Putahi Kura Puhou
O Aotearoa

Professionalisation: It's Good for Teachers and It's Good for Children

Lynne Bruce

Lynne is Director of Early Childhood Teacher Education at Wellington College of Education, and a former kindergarten teacher.

The time is ripe, I believe, for teachers employed by kindergarten associations [and in fact for all teachers in the early childhood education (ECE) sector] to take active steps to become members of the teaching profession.



If we take a quick review of the literature, it is interesting to note that New Zealander, Peter Dinniss, was at the forefront of discussion about the professionalisation of ECE services. Dinniss, at an education research conference over twenty-six years ago, argued that those working in the Playcentre and Kindergarten services could be on the road to professionalisation, citing three key criteria to support his argument:

- i. The undertaking of prolonged training;
- ii. The broad range of autonomous responsibilities held by personnel in those services; and

- iii. That ECE held a unique position and was essential for society.

Dinniss did not consider either the childcare or family daycare sectors as they were, at that time, situated outside the education portfolio.

A focus of early papers published argued the need for the professionalisation of ECE in order to position teachers as having a higher status, therefore earning the right to good salaries and conditions of service alongside their colleagues in the primary and secondary sectors.

In the eighties, Lilian Katz called for the professionalisation of ECE, arguing the need for teachers to possess specialised knowledge to underpin their professional judgements, thus leading to standards of performance. She later conceptualised a scientific concept of the *nature of a profession*, involving the following eight interdependent characteristics:

- specialised knowledge;
 - prolonged training;
 - standards of practice;
 - distance from client;
 - a code of ethics;
 - autonomy;
 - altruism;
 - social necessity.
- (Katz, 1995)

Continued on page 11

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Education Services Central Ltd.

Editorial

Averil Stevenson, President NZKI

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the New Zealand Kindergarten Inc newsletter, 'Te Manu Hou', published to mark the re-launch of the organisation.

The vision is to establish an internal newsletter which serves education management and practitioners, and will be sought after by people outside the organisation, because of its content, the rigorousness and challenge of debate, international and national research findings, and the range of news and views presented.

From time to time Association Managers, Presidents, Teachers or Professional Service Managers, Kindergarten parents or representatives of other Early Childhood Education providers or stakeholders will be invited to contribute. The Board will also contribute regularly, and readers may write to the editor.

On behalf of the national Board, I thank the contributors to this first issue and look forward to more from them in future, and to the work of many more people active in the field of Early Childhood Education, and Kindergarten in particular. And I invite people from all the roles within Member Associations to read, promote and distribute the newsletter.

The new logo is a professional, durable, unique, memorable brand, to carry the organisation forward into the third century of kindergartens in New Zealand. We thank Sharyn Young of Creative Graphics for her design, and management of the print production, and those young and older entrants in the logo competition, some of whom created professional designs that were however, not suitable for our purposes.

The world is changing at a pace that was probably unimaginable to many of us who hold the social, economic and other powers now. Our conference theme, Building Our children's Future is therefore a very deep subject to plumb. Our ability to embrace and work with the new technologies will enable us to talk to our children and grandchildren.

Our re-vamped website is now on-line, thanks to the work of Jillian Key. The new site will grow to meet the demands of the organisation, and its increased technological capabilities, to enable faster and wider access to our own information, and to provide a useful resource to the community of interest.

I thank our sponsors for the launch, HIH and Wilkinson Insurance Brokers incorporating bg brokers, and Hocus Pocus Toys, for their support. The Insurance Group has sponsored the first year of Te Manu Hou and our new state of the art banner, for and of which, we are grateful and proud.

Special thanks to our speakers, Mrs Pat Lockhart, Life Member, and Mr Roger McLay, Commissioner for Children for their contributions to the event.

Last and not least, I thank you, our guests: colleagues, supporters, friends and mentors for attending the 31 May launch. We anticipate enduring relationships with you for the benefit of early childhood education, and especially Kindergarten.

Letters to the Editor

Letters should be

- 300 words or less
- typed
- faxed, mailed, or emailed to the Editor
- Name, address, telephone number, and signature of author *must be included*
- Anonymous letters will not be published.
- The Editor reserves the right to publish or withhold letters.
- No correspondence will be entered into.
- Late letters will not be published, unless issues raised remain relevant for a subsequent edition of the newsletter.

Letters deadline - September issue: 15 August.

Advertising

One issue:	
Full page	\$150.00
Half page	\$75.00
Quarter page	\$40.00
Less than quarter page	\$30.00

Advertising deadline - September issue: 31 July.

Dedicated Mailout

A4 or DL envelope	\$75.00
	+ GST and postage

Editorial Policy Statement

The viewpoints expressed by contributors to this newsletter are not necessarily compliant with those of the Board of New Zealand Kindergartens Inc.

Dr Anne Meade Interviewed On-line

Stimulated by Dr Anne Meade's articles in Pitopito Korero (No 22 - March 2000) on circle time and documentation and display of children's work in the US, I (Karen Sole) arranged to interview her on-line. Dr Meade is a Fulbright Senior Scholar, currently living and researching in Washington DC.

Circle time

Dr Anne Meade, you said benefits result from 'thoughtful planning and skilful facilitation, every time'. And that facilitation is 'hard work, skilled work'. You also posed a reflective question: 'How can we achieve this level of involvement in dialogues in New Zealand?'

Q.1: What ideas do you have about what needs to change in New Zealand for a high level of involvement in dialogues to happen?

I am keen to see more equal-partner dialogues happening, not necessarily in circle times.

Circle times have some advantages. They can stimulate and satisfy children's curiosity about what others are doing. Their interest and motivation to learn from others is likely to be high. Children hear others' ideas about people, places and things, which stimulate their memory of similar experiences and their own theories. Circle times can also have disadvantages, especially if they are too big, the content is not worthy of children's time, and processes are not handled well.

The physical context is important if educators want to have group discussions of value to children. Children must be able to hear each other and see the facial expressions of those present. Watch out for distractions if circle meetings are tried, from adults chatting or doing something else nearby – what message does that send?

The social context is also important. I assume that centres will be implementing Te Whaariki. Implementation of the Well-being and Belonging strands, in particular, should provide the necessary context of respectful, caring relationships. Those strands set the scene for greater communication and contributions in dialogues. The children's explorations provide content.

A routine for transition into circle times was clear in all centres I visited, and a common thread was establishing a relaxed but attentive atmosphere.

Planning and preparation for circle meetings or small group discussion times is important too. It

includes: (a) knowing current events in family lives and interests of the children so that links to these can be made in order to draw in more children; (b) thinking carefully about an opening sequence that is relevant to what is happening that day, and will gain children's interest within half a minute. How will you introduce Jamie who wants to describe the puncture they had on the way to kindergarten? (c) predicting ahead of time the possible direction of thinking and having something to contribute if that prediction is correct.

Listening with genuine interest to individual children's talk, being attuned to their ideas, is so important. Follow-up open-ended questions, comments that extend children's ideas, and intent body language, convey such a lot. Included in the group contract in all centres where I've observed good dialogues are agreements not to interrupt when people are talking, and to share ideas with the whole group, not with a neighbour; i.e., the children are also encouraged to listen with respect to each other.

Q.2: What areas of teacher education/training/skill development, or usage of these, do we need to activate for it to happen?

We are dealing with 'know-how' knowledge here, which requires experience and practice until good listening and questioning skills have become habits. Thus, I'd recommend focusing on usage of principles that are commonly included in teacher education. I've noticed, however, that good listening and questioning are not likely to happen until educators believe in the value of listening to children theorize out loud.

Action research where practice sessions are taped for later review has been a powerful mechanism for changing listening and talking practices. Of course, audio or videotapes can be recorded without any research component. Indeed, staff did that frequently in two US centres I visited. Staff would listen to themselves and make reflective comments such as: "Poor Anne; she had to make that point three times before I got it. I should have paid more attention to the gestures she made, patting the top of her head, and asked her what they were for."

Small group or individual dialogues are as important, if not more important, as circle meetings. It is the equal-partner exploration of ideas that matter. Circle meetings are but one venue for them.

Keep practising – practice is powerful experiential learning. Self-evaluation can be supplemented from time to time by professional feedback – from tutors (in the case of student teachers), or colleagues.

Continued on Page 8

Insurance Corner – An Update From Your Brokers

Olwyn Griffin, bg brokers

Name Change

Our name has changed. Early in 2000 we merged with Wilkinson Insurance Brokers (Wgtn) Ltd, and now operate as a division of that company.

Olwyn, Gary and Malcolm (Milne) still handle the day to day insurance claims and requests from Kindergartens.

ACC

You will all by now have heard that the Government has reversed legislation that introduced competition to the ACC workplace. As a result (and providing the premium you paid last year exceeded \$50 + GST), you will be sent a form on which you must declare the payroll from 01 July 1999 to 30 June 2000. The insurer will adjust the premium on the rates charged last year. Please refer any problems: we will try to assist you if that becomes necessary.

New Covers

We continue to take every opportunity to widen the scope of the insurance contracts arranged on your behalf. During the past year several important gains were negotiated:

Criminal defence costs:

We negotiated an extension to the professional indemnity cover to provide legal defence costs for defending allegations of sexual abuse against employees which became effective on 01 January 2000.

If the allegations are proved against the defendant, then the cover ceases at that stage, but no attempt is made to recover the costs incurred.

Loss of earning due to forced closure:

If a centre is closed by an authority for health or disciplinary reasons (following, say allegations of misconduct against pupils or an outbreak of infectious disease), then the insurer will pay the loss of earnings (funding) up to a maximum of \$10,000.



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Olwyn Griffin olwyn@wibco.co.nz Gary Brown gary@wibco.co.nz

Building Our Children's Future Building Our Children

Karen Sole, National Office Manager

Building Our Children's Future is both a daunting conference theme, and societal task. In my mind is a giant web of social, economic, and political complexity with filaments stretching hither and yon in wavering attempts to inter-connect. For me, whatever uncertainties there may be, the solid, constant, shining core is absolutely concerned with the self esteem of each and every child born into this crazy world of conflict and paradox.

Even if limitations were set, such as considering only New Zealand children's future, how would we set about addressing the issues and themes that might arise, and how manage these into a coherent presentation or workshop for the conference?

First, the Board brainstormed what it might mean to build our children's future. They would create the right environment, in which kindergarten is 'a strong stepping stone for life', and where children would be prepared and encouraged *to be able to learn*. The challenge is what's the world going to be like 10, 20, 30 years from now? And what will our children need? Other concepts noted were enriching, empowering, nurturing for success, knowledge, dreams, imagination, hopes, aspirations, and planning, all tied up with a bow of flexibility. Holistic development; strength; and a step by step process, like building a house were also mentioned. And that children's future is kindergarten's future. This last is important: the children and their situation, whatever it is, will shape the future of kindergarten, not the reverse.

'Catch them while they're good. Creative kids need praise every day'

Second, a small but diverse group of people came together to discuss their ideas. They were a chief executive, a computer programme developer, a designer, and a women's officer from a professional body. In this group the talk was about having a sense of a positive future, how to open out and not close off possibilities or make life overwhelming for young people; about having a society that will embrace every child, and of conscious living: of choosing rather than letting life happen to us. We need commitment at government level to continually fulfil the goals we have for our children – a level and degree of commitment that delivers an integrated and whole package.

The group also talked positively about children and young people having fun, of valuing play for life, and a life for learning, and loving to learn.

'...innovation, the sense of a wave of knowledge-based industry, knowledge as a capital base: how do we prepare for that?'

Everyone spoke very strongly about the ability to relate, to have relationship skills, to be able to socialise, and learn. For the group, the broad base for building our children's future is values. The details, for example, numeracy and literacy, come next. The powerful feeling of the importance of innovation, of the sense of a wave of knowledge-based industry, knowledge as a capital base came through strongly, as did the question - how do we prepare for that?

'appreciate enquiry. ...'

One of the answers was to appreciate enquiry, to value the questions that children ask, and respond genuinely to them. We need to prepare children so that they can cope with rapid change, and to acknowledge that the choices of the future are beyond our imaginations now, and that we may be channelling them in opposition to reality.

'...the choices of the future are beyond our imaginations...'

If we adults are unable to imagine the future, what do children and young people see ahead of them? And what should we be doing for them?

Hearing from children ... and young adults.

Beautiful strong Maori chanting / singing floated down the corridor from another class, haka practices in full ihi outside in the cool sunshine, and greetings from our group of students in Maori and English, at this school of the resilient present and commanding future, Newtown Primary School.

Avantika, Imogen, Jessie, Raymond, Anaru, Aiziz, Michael, Jessie, Kiwa, BJ, Leigh, Amanda, Tyrone, Summah, Kurt, and Sian painted and talked about their futures while David and Martin, from Wellington High School filmed and photographed them.

<p>Child Safety Foundation of New Zealand Safe Play CD Rom for 3 – 6 year olds helps children to be safer, adults more aware. For information re purchase, plus: www.childsafety.co.nz</p>

Building Our Children's Future Building Our Children

'I'm going on a mission to mars.

I'm going in a rocket to the moon. I'll be freezing.

I'm gonna go with my friend...' Kiwa, 6.

'If you have too many babies, it costs too much.'
Avantika, 6.



From Newtown School to Wellington High School. All around the dress, demeanour and style is relaxed, comfortable, polite, assured. And not a uniform in sight!

There's a rock concert playing in the nearby hall soon. In the back of the hall is a radio station, broadcasting in a 5 Km radius including the CBD.

The library, where our session is to be, is in part of the new block, which houses music rehearsal and recording studios, and video editing suites.

Perhaps I'll go back to school...



'...probably have spaceships and floating cars.'

Michael. 10

The WHS discussion group included Eleanor, Katie, Amber, Mary, Jon, Karla, Andrew, Alex, Sarah, Jenna, Rachel, and Sofia, and some more!

Their views on life, work, social equity and justice will be aired at the New Zealand Kindergartens' Annual Conference workshop 'Building Our Children's Future' on 09 June.

listen so your kids will talk: talk so your kids will listen so your kids will talk: talk so your kids will listen so your

's Future Building Our Children's Future Building Our

'I want to try to save the trees from being killed down, because too many are being (killed down), and there's less oxygen.' Jessie, 10

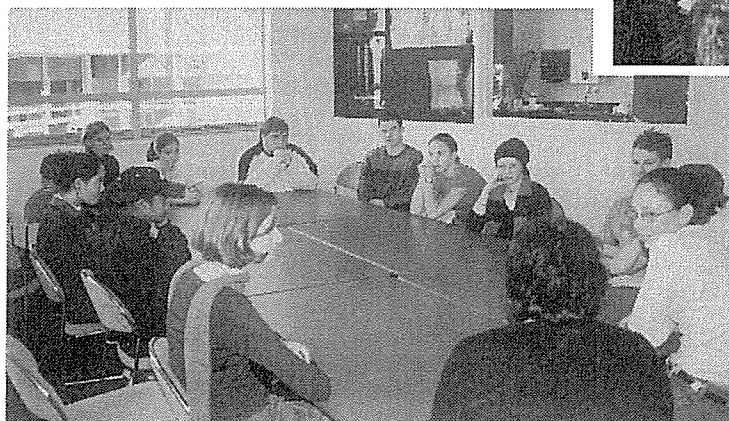
'A teacher or a social worker.' Imogen, 6

'I was thinking about being a teacher.'

Leigh, 10

'...a famous dancer.'

Michael. 10



'I want to be a scuba diver...

go to places I haven't been before

...visit a coral reef or something.'

Amanda, 10

Acknowledgements: Thanks to the students of Newtown Primary and Wellington High Schools, for their words of wisdom, hope and warning; to their principals Rhys McKinley, and Pru Kelly, and teachers Sally and Gavin; to the video and photography crew of David and Martin; and to Shar, Sue, Mike and Viv for respectful words about young people, and inspiring thoughts about the world and workshops ■

listen so your kids will talk: talk so your kids will listen so your kids will talk: talk so your kids will listen so your

Dr Anne Meade On-line – continued from page 3

Document and displays

You said that extended time on some activities could be developed further in New Zealand services. Also, you commented that the structural aspects of the Project Approach – investigation, representation, discussion, fieldwork, and display - have some similarities to the strands in *Te Whaariki*.

Q.3: What are your thoughts about New Zealand educators doing or being able to extend children's thinking, experiences and memory systems with or without using a Project Approach.

The Project Approach is a means by which first-hand experiences, that are relevant and meaningful in children's lives, are placed at the heart of their (early) education. In part, it was developed as an alternative to inappropriate curricula and too much teacher instruction. Nowadays, it has been shaped into a coherent approach that has lots of potential for integrating emotion, thinking and learning, and for extending children.

Relating experiences to a project topic gives learning experiences:

- a shape by making connections between individual explorations;
- a longer time scale and movement through three phases: recall, investigation, and representing new learning;
- a focus for documenting the evolution of learning/ theorizing on the topic;
- a named entity for sharing with and involving parents;
- opportunities to integrate knowledge from various interrelated investigations;
- a focus for initiating diverse and relevant experiences "beyond the fence" so to speak;
- a sense of belonging to a community whose learning interests are related;
- a narrative that all can play a part in creating and enjoy reading later.

I believe that some additional features of the approach are not dependent on the existence of a project. They include educators assisting children:

- to use a range of sensory systems, body and mind to explore experiences;
- to use many different learning media;
- to express ideas through the arts;
- to become deeply engaged in exploring something of interest;
- to become more knowledgeable about that something;

- to understand and use language to do with the mind working;
- to take responsibility for individual and collective learning;
- to use their working memories a lot, and to build long-term memories;
- to enhance their cognitive skills to recall, plan, investigate, report, and evaluate their knowledge and actions;
- to involve parents. (Yes, it was usually the child who initiated the parent involvement!)

Most features in the second list could be or are already woven through New Zealand programmes based on Te Whaariki without having an overarching topic and a time-slot for project work.

In addition, I think that several of the features on the first list are also possible without a specific topic: for example, children continuing creative or exploratory work on a longer time scale; educators documenting the evolution of learning/ theorizing on a subject; and educators initiating relevant experiences "beyond the fence". I suspect, however, that the teacher motivation to do any or all of them is bolstered by having the focus of a Project that is going to be synthesized in a document at the end.

Q.4: What areas of professional development and skills need to be activated to extend children to use more complex mental skills? What additional human and material resources, if any, would be necessary? *The educators in the settings where I saw children regularly challenged to use more complex mental skills were well-qualified and were in communities of learners – adults were life-long learners as was evident in their doing further study. Their employment conditions encouraged them to do this.*

There is a belief out there that any professional development that challenges educators will have a flow-on effect for children. I am not so sure. In my view, professional development needs to include two important things. The first is to change educators' habits of mind. In early childhood education, there are still many educators who seem to believe that children's development simply happens. That needs to change. Many don't behave as if they believe that their teaching matters. It does. The second is to give educators practice in making changes in their practice. This should be in real-life situations, but where the practice is formally observed and evaluated. The evaluation could be self-evaluation, or involving others.

Continued on back page

A Professional Renaissance? The case for a genuine partnership between teachers and the state: a personal view

Dr John Langley, Director, Teacher Registration Board



One of the unfortunate side effects of the educational reforms of the last decade has been to de-professionalise teachers.

The philosophy of the self-managing school, the dominance of employment relationships over professional ones, the linking of professional standards to contractual negotiations, and the lack of a standard set of ideals or principles that unite the profession have all contributed to this. In fact it could be said that far from there being a teaching profession as such, there is, in reality, some 3200 different places where teachers are employed.

This is not to say that the developments mentioned do not have merit. They do. However, the collective impact of them all has been to remove the professional quality and judgement of teachers. Looking into the future, if the state, the parents, and the profession itself is really interested in establishing an environment where truly high standards of performance and ethical conduct are fostered, it must come from a profession that is more professional, not less.

I believe there are three important issues which must be explored here. The first is what it means to be a professional person. The next is what the qualities of a professional teacher might be. Finally, the issue of a professional body for teachers would seem to be fundamental in promoting issues of quality.

If you examine the characteristics of most professions there will be a number of common features. These include a common body of knowledge, a code of ethics, some agreed standards of performance, and members of the profession exercising some control over the direction the profession takes. All of this is good and fine, but there is one more crucial feature.

According to the American Bar Association, a group can only call itself a profession if it is pursuing a "learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service". There, I've said it - public service. In these days of managerialism, corporate image, and employment contracts, it can easily be argued that any notion of doing something out of service to others is viewed almost as naïve. It simply doesn't fit with the slick business like approach that has come to dominate all aspects of our lives.

What the American Bar Association is saying is that lying deep within the ethos of any profession is a notion of social good. Sure, you might be earning your living from the job, but there is more to it than that. It is that you are contributing to the improvement of the lives of others. It is that you want to perform to a high level not just because a contract says so, but because it will provide the people you are working for with a better service, and because that service is important to them.

Teachers know this. They perform many tasks every day because the children need them to do so, not because they are specifically being paid for them.

So what are the qualities that teachers need to be true professionals? I believe there are five, and I speak here as a parent as well as an educationalist. The first is that teachers must possess the knowledge and skill to cause learning. I know it is true that teachers have had to take on many roles these days - social workers, counsellors, first aiders, and surrogate parents. Despite that, if a teacher is unable to cause learning then she or he is not performing the most fundamental and important aspect of the role.

Continued on page 10

Have your say - write to the editor - next copy deadline for letters is 15 August 2000

A Professional Renaissance?

Dr John Langley Continued from page 9

Teachers also need to challenge the horizons of children. Far too often mediocrity is expected and accepted. If education is going to be a vehicle for economic prosperity and social justice then accepting the status quo will never achieve these aims. Teaching children to push themselves, to set their own goals, to attempt new problems, and to think outside the square are an essential part of any teacher's professional armoury.

Unfortunately, many teachers tell me they are so busy getting through the curriculum that the process becomes almost mechanical with children having little time for practice, reflection, and experimentation. Poor kids is all I can say.

Another professional quality of teachers is to teach children how to be life long learners. A love of learning is not genetic. Nor is it chemically induced. It is learned. I want the teachers of my children to reinforce their desire to learn, to encourage them to learn more, and to be prepared to take some risks along the way.

I also want my children treated with compassion, sensitivity, and skill. One of the most important memories that people take away from their school days is how they were treated at crucial moments. A classroom crisis dealt with quietly and sensitively, a playground incident treated with compassion and the correct consequences, a kind and caring word when life all seems just too much, and a firm encouraging hand when a confidence boost is required. These are all things which highly skilled teachers do all the time. Not only do they know what to do, but, just as importantly, when to do it.

I want those things for my children - they deserve nothing less. Neither do all of yours.

Finally, all teachers who are professionals seek ongoing knowledge and a desire to constantly improve their performance. This is not because they are told to do so. Nor is it just because some increment or other might be hanging in the balance. It is because one of the values which teachers hold dear is to constantly work at providing a better service for the children they teach, and their families.

You may think that I am saying that money and conditions of service are not important. That is not so. Of course they are important. For far too long the work of teachers has been undervalued and underpaid. Still is really. What I am saying is that there is simply more to it than this. To continue to boil everything down to employment

conditions and contractual obligations is to ignore some of the most important and fundamental features of what it means to be a professional teacher.

That brings me to the question of a professional body for teachers. The development of a professional body for teachers is fundamental to any renaissance in the professionalism of teachers. What is also important is that such a body must be a partnership between teachers and the state.

Let's be clear. The state has a huge interest in the professionalism and performance of teachers. Tens of millions are spent training them and the state employs 97 per cent of them. It can also be argued that the state represents the public interest in education. So to ignore the interests of the state would be foolish.

But the professional standards, values, and direction of the teaching profession should not be placed in the hands of the state alone. Teachers themselves must

have an equal part in developing these things, and be responsible and accountable for them. Only in this way will the profession re-claim some of the lost professional ground of recent years, and begin to grow. To ignore the role of teachers in this process is equally foolish.

There is a unique opportunity here for the state and a large professional group to demonstrate that they can actually work together with mutual respect. That has to be much more constructive than the "these teachers need sorting out" and the "they've done it to us again" mentality which has pervaded the last few years.

If a professional body for teachers is to be developed and succeed it must:

- have ownership by the profession
- be grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the profession
- recognise the interest and role of the state as the main employer
- be seen as necessary and valuable by key stakeholders
- and have legislative backing.

None of this would appear to be rocket science. What it does require is mutual trust, the notion that both the state and teachers want the same sort of things for our children and that it is possible to work together to achieve that. The professional body for teachers is the mechanism by which that process can occur. It can't come too soon.

Continued on back page

Hit our revamped website and check later for news and views www.nzkindergarten.org.nz

Professionalisation continued from front page

Lynne Bruce

The debate over professionalism continued in the nineties with Feeney (1985) reiterating the need to have a firm research base, an agreed set of principles and a code of ethics to underpin professional practices. She, along with Katz (1985), signalled that ECE leaders needed to “advocate and live the profession” but doing so in the interests of children and families. Here was an early shift of the professionalisation debate from a focus on industrial issues to what was important for children.

Stonehouse (1988) picked up the debate in the Australasian region, focusing on those in childcare, with a call that ECE must make serious attempts to tell policymakers (and the public) what we do. Stonehouse also saw that it was essential to belong to a professional organisation and be committed to professional development, though she noted conditions of work in ECE did little to assist that. Stonehouse emphasised that society was not *child-centred* in spite of value laden statements being commonly heard by policymakers e.g. ‘children are a valuable resource’.

In the nineties, Blomberg (1991) lifted the debate to a new level. Although advocating that teaching is a profession as it met criteria of specialised knowledge and was *client orientated*, Blomberg believed it was necessary for teachers to become *enforcers* of standards of practice and ethics. Blomberg argued that this approach would guarantee a high level of competence and promote professional development through self evaluation and personal, professional goal setting - a move towards the notion of the reflective teacher.

Meade (1995), in her address in London, explored the changes that have developed in New Zealand since the shift of childcare from the social welfare to the education portfolio along with the new ECE reforms brought in by the Labour Government in 1990. She highlighted three webs of influence: firstly, that these political reforms, coupled secondly with a professional stance in ECE teaching, led to the third web, that of scholarly thinking teachers who recognised the potentials of children. She advocated strongly that policies must be focused on educational purposes and benefits, and in her view children gain from this. In the final part of her paper, Meade noted that early childhood teachers need to be professional to deliver high quality education through “best practice” to ensure positive outcomes for children and their families.

One can clearly understand that the professionalisation of ECE (part of a profession) is not only good for teachers but also good for children, as it gives parents some guarantees of a consistent quality service, designed with the interests of *client at heart*; in the words of John Langley (from the Teacher Registration Board) “in the spirit of public service”.¹

Why is it timely to grasp this opportunity to take the final steps in the declaration of kindergarten teaching as a profession?

The new Labour Government has clearly indicated its commitment to policies to ensure and enhance high quality ECE. Firstly, the move to return kindergartens, under the auspices of associations, to the state sector restores the unique character of kindergartens and indicates an understanding of their historical diversity (note that the community still call them “state kindergartens”). This move demonstrates a commitment by Government to their role in ECE and assists with the call by John Langley to a teaching profession whereby “the state and a large professional body can work together with mutual respect in the interests of children’s education”. The establishment of a Teaching Council by mid 2001 and the commitment to the registration of teachers in kindergartens (in fact the commitment to a universal teacher registration in ECE) builds the platform for the profession to grow on.

Professor Gammage, in a recent visit, argued strongly that “teachers should be educated, not merely trained and that without effective, knowledgeable early childhood professionals, societies would lack cohesion” (1999, p1). The recent announcement requiring the ‘person responsible’ to have a qualification that results from a cohesive, prolonged training programme, and the move of many teachers undertaking teacher education degrees (either by upgrading from a Diploma of Teaching (EC) or through preservice teacher education) goes a long way to ensuring effective, knowledgeable early childhood professionals.

The webs of influence (Meade, 1995) - political, scholarly and professional - have now come together. It just requires those in kindergarten teaching and, in fact, throughout ECE, to grasp this window of opportunity and advocate for their professional status, along with parity remuneration across the teaching sector - it’s good for early childhood teaching and it’s good for children.

Continued on back page

¹ John Langley’s article “A professional renaissance? The case for a genuine partnership between teachers and the state: A personal view is published also in this quarterly newsletter.”



Board Talk

News - views from national Board Members

Watch this space in the September issue, for news, views and information from the national Board. ■

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Te Manu Hou – 'the fledgling'

Dr Anne Meade Interview – continued from page 8

In the case of complex mental skills practice I would include:

- listening for and noting children's meanings;
- asking worthwhile questions;
- making comments that challenge children to process their content;
- extending worthwhile conversations – their own and amongst children;
- framing social situations for children to negotiate agreements.

I think the resources needed for effecting changes in practice must include time to prepare mentally and on paper, and time to go over whatever observational records of practices are kept to decide on future changes. Professional development advisers are another key resource ■

Advertorial

Education Services Central and NZKI: An Effective Business Relationship

Michael Meadowcroft, Finance Sub-committee NZKI Board

New Zealand Kindergartens Inc has contracted with Wayne Costello, General Manager of Education Services Central, for them to provide financial services for a further two years.

We have found that ESC are professional and reliable, and the staff friendly and easy to work with.

ESC had previously provided services to schools around the North Island, for which they had received high praise from education and accountancy organisations. Therefore, working with the kindergarten sector is a logical business development for them.

Education Services Central is a company dedicated to top service, and they would be happy to respond, without obligation, to any enquiry from any Kindergarten Association considering a review of their existing arrangements for financial management and reporting. ■



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