



"Our goal is an authentic human being, and our actions are guided by respect.

It is easy to use big words such as authentic or respect, it is difficult to put them into practice, especially under the pressure of every day life. RIE has developed a methodology which allows you, whether you are a parent, or a professional caring for infants, to become aware of infants needs and how to meet them. And, in the process you will hopefully become aware of your own needs and how to synchronise those two. This is the goal of RIE training.

Magda Gerber, RIE Conference keynote speech 1979.

Welcome to TLC's autumn newsletter. In this edition, we have an article from Nikki about our older children and real work, and how you, the community, can contribute to this. We also have an article from Sally about emergent literacy which I think is very helpful for our whānau to understand literacy in an early childhood context, and therefore how to support your child (i.e. not working from expectations of what is appropriate when they are older). Elena has an article with some practical advice, based on our philosophy, around how to manage pick up time.

This year our Parent Voice Committee has re-defined their charter, and are looking to increase the engagement of the

TLC community. To help to achieve this we engaged Liza Savage to take a lovely photo of the committee, so you can recognise them, see page 9.

You recently let us know via our survey that you DO value the newsletter and do not think it has been replaced by Educa. As a thank you, we will make more of an effort to produce them more regularly.

We regularly have requests from our community for more information about our philosophy, so I have included some quotes from one of Magda Gerber's speeches I have recently re-listened to

I hope you enjoy this newsletter, and as always, I encourage your feedback.

Some words of wisdom from Magda Gerber

“all those unglamorous, everyday, routine experiences, like feeding, resting, diapering, have the greatest affect on the baby”

**Magda Gerber,
RIE Conference
keynote speech
1979.**

I recently listened to a RIE Conference Keynote speech by Magda Gerber (the founder of Resources For Infant Educators RIE) and it inspired me all over again. I transcribed some of my key takeaways to include in this newsletter so that I could share them with you.

On REAL Choices

“Trust develops when the primary carer allows the child to anticipate what is going to happen to him. They must relate their trust in the infant .. then trust him to be an initiator of activities. Infants do perceive their inner feelings and needs and learn to communicate them. Carers however, who are not sensitively observing the infant do not respond to his communications, but rather their own interpretations of the infants needs. For example a mother who is cold may cover the infant before first trying to find out if the infant is cold or warm. Making appropriate choices in life, is a learning process lasting from birth to death. Few people realise at what an early age infants are capable of making proper choices if given the opportunity. The carer has to differentiate between situations according to whether where the infant has a real choice or not. If there is a real choice for instance “do you want to be picked up now” and the child responds negatively or with disinterest he should be left alone. If no choice is involved, the carer does not ask, but states the intended action. “I am going to pick you up now, it is time to go” then the child is picked up.

On Curriculum for Infants

Appropriate curriculum for infants should not be a special teaching plan added to these baby activities, but rather it should be built in the infants every experience. The types of programs offered, as well as curricula, should evolve as a joint effort between the carers and the infants. Their roles are divided, the carer provides space, objects, and loving care. The infant explores the space, manipulates the objects, develops trust and self-confidence. The guidelines for any and all intervention, must be based on observation, empathy, sensitivity and respect for the infant.

“RIE visualises a human being who has some or many of the following characteristics:

- realistic trust, in himself and his environment,
- perception of his inner needs and an ability to communicate them
- the ability to make choices for himself, which includes knowing and accepting the consequences of his choices
- flexibility and the capacity to learn from past experiences
- an ability to deal actively with the present and plan for the future
- free access to his creative talents and resources
- a person who is goal oriented and also can enjoy the process of problem solving, whether physical, emotional or cognitive ... because the process is like himself.”

Magda Gerber, RIE Conference keynote speech 1979.

Some words of wisdom from Magda Gerber .. continued

While emphasising the infants need for autonomy, one must keep in mind the utmost importance of the relationship that the infant develops with his primary carer. An intimate trusting relationship is the prerequisite for a healthy separation and individuation of the child. Only after he gets refuelled (which he gets through the unhurried times with his carer), will he be willing to let go of the carer and explore his environment. IF our goal is an authentic individual we should let him be an authentic infant.

Flexibility of the body and mind develops throughout repeated exploratory exercises of infants in free play. Infants who are restricted by mechanical devices .. such as infant seats, bouncers, walkers swings .. or who are encouraged to assume positions for which they are not yet ready, are not moving freely. Propping up an infant into a sitting position before he can sit up or lie down by himself, will not make him move better or become flexible or autonomous. Infants do naturally have access to their own resources unless we superimpose tasks which are beyond their capabilities. It is truly fascinating infants solving their own problems with concentration, endurance and good frustration tolerance. **This happens if adults are available rather than intrusive and if they learn to wait to see if the child can work it out for themselves before offering help.** A freely exploring child, selects his own problems and is internally motivated to solve them in his own way. And continuously learning without experiencing failure.



What's happening in the Tui group

By Nikki and the Tui team

We love spending time with the children and just listening to their ideas and observing their actions. They constantly amaze us. At the moment there are strong interests in 'real work', life cycles (insects and tadpoles), gardening, collage, making traps, what we did in our holidays, all kind of construction, writing, 20 questions, clay work, baking and cooking, water play, making cities and roads in the sandpit, sculpture, drama, dance, ball play and stories just to name a few!

What we do at planning meetings is we share what we have seen, for three of the many strong play interests that we observe, (Notice) and what the learning is behind the play (Recognise) and then we discuss how we can consolidate, celebrate or add complexity to what the children are doing and learning. (Respond).

We then talk about what we could do, or add to the environment, to enhance children's exploration and learning. We consider how, what we have noticed, links to different curriculum areas, schema learning theory and/or learning dispositions. Then we also talk about how you, the parents, could possibly support the children's learning.

At the moment we are specifically planning for children's interests in; 'real work', dancing and construction (including hut making) as I have already outlined in an Educa post. We, of course are also responsive to children's other day to day interests and ongoing passions, for example insect hunting, maps, letter writing and sand baking.

One of our goals for this year is to get parents more involved in this way. We have had a wonderful response to our request for parents and whanau to bring in their interests and skills, in relation to our current planning interests as well as stories from home.



Over the past few weeks we have had parents and family members come in and teach the children how to clean the bearings in our skateboard wheels, teach the children how to spin wool, make darts, record their own music, play musical instruments for us and talk about being a territorial.

We have other parents and whanau lined up, and we are feeling so very fortunate. We have had other amazing offers for dancers, making a letterbox out of wood, bakers and different vocations. Brilliant. We have decided to limit these to one a week as not to overwhelm the children.

We have already been very fortunate to have Birdie's Dad, Greg make the tadpole habitat with the children.

So please take a moment to think about anyway you could help, do you bake or cook? (we are getting a small oven with a cook top), do you have a kiln??, do you weave, do you paint?

We are wondering if there are any parents' work places close enough to walk to so we can learn a little bit more about 'real-work'.

The possibilities are endless. We are all very excited about this year. The energy is fantastic. Thanks to everyone, the teachers, the PVC and the children and their whaanau.



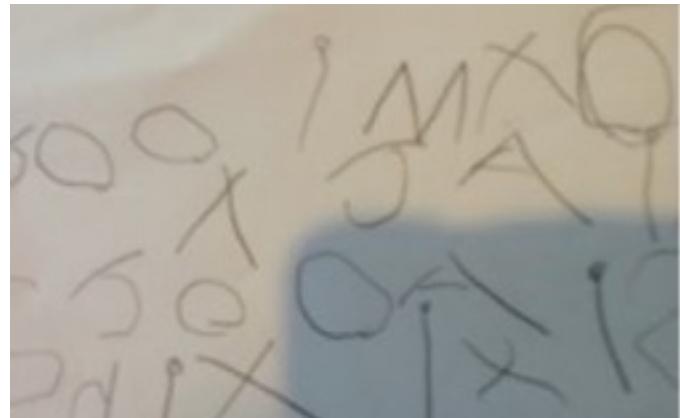
Emergent Writing

By Sally

"Encouraging young children to 'write' in the way that they want to write increases their motivation and allows them to focus on the message they want to convey"
(Burns & Casberge, 1992).

This quote embodies much of my thinking and approach towards children's attempts at writing. Emergent writing demonstrates that children are beginning to understand writing as a form of communication and that marks on the paper begin to convey a message. Writing essentially is making marks to communicate something.

In order to have reached even this understanding a child has to have got to terms with the concept of symbolism and developed the fine motor physical skills of holding a pencil. Logic would say learning to write would entail learning how to form letters and then combine them to form words. Research has proven this



than drawing. Random marks or scribbles often occur on a page with drawings.

Mock Handwriting or Wavy Scribble: Children produce lines of wavy scribbles as they imitate adult cursive writing. Their writing often appears on a page with drawings.

Mock Letters: Children attempt to form alphabetic representations, which also often appear in their drawings. Writing sometimes can be more vertical than horizontal. Children make letter-like shapes that resemble conventional letters.

Conventional Letters: Children's first experiments with real letters are usually the letters from their name or a family member's name. Children often create "strings" of letters across a page and "read" them as sentences or a series of sentences. These may appear on drawings as the child's signature or description of the drawing. Words do not resemble either the look or the sound of the actual word attempted. Once children are fairly comfortable writing conventional letters, they begin to cluster letters together to make word forms. These words do not look or sound like "real" words. Children in this stage often ask, What did I write?

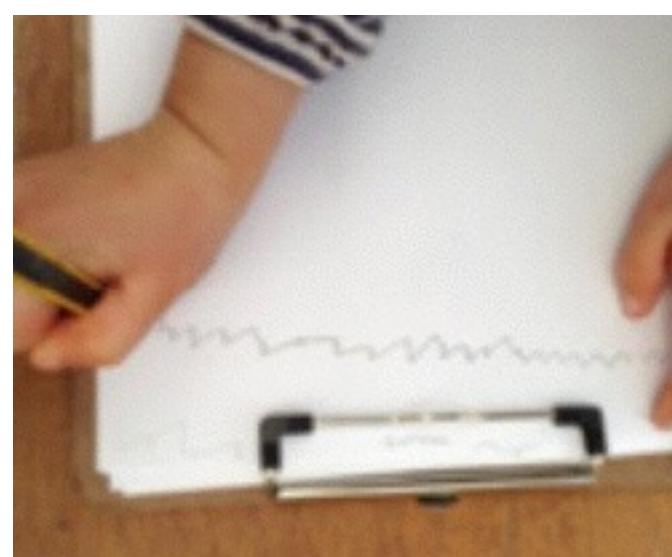


otherwise. Rather than mastering the parts (letters) first, children do just the opposite. They attend to the whole (written lines) first, and much later to the parts (letters) (Temple, Nathan, & Burris, 1993)

From their own observations, and not from being taught, they seem to extract the broad general features of the writing system: that it is arranged in rows across a page; that it consists of loops, sticks, and connected lines, repeated over and over. Some children fill pages of scribbled lines over and over from top to bottom in a sort of self-imposed practice.

Emergent writing progresses on a developmental continuum. Several stages have been identified, Elizabeth Sulsky (1990) recognises 7 different stages although up to 17 sub stages have been classified.

Scribbling: writing begins with the first explorations using a marking tool for a purpose other



Emergent Writing .. continued

By Sally

Approximated (Phonetic) Spelling: Children apply sounds to letters to approximate the spellings of words. Beginning sounds are used first, ending sounds second. Middle sounds follow and short vowel sounds come last. Children attempt to spell words based on their growing awareness of letter sounds and on their memory of words they have seen repeatedly. These beginning words are usually written in capital letters or in a combination of capital and lower case letters, whichever are easiest to draw and are most frequently seen in the environment.

Conventional Spellings: Children's approximated spellings gradually become more and more conventional. The child's own name is usually written first, followed by words such as mum, dad, and love. Initially children may incorrectly copy words. Eventually words will be written correctly.

Adults can support the child's move to conventional spelling by being patient and by continuing to serve as a good writing model.



(Adapted from Project ELIPSS, Macomb Projects, Western Illinois University, 27 Horrabin Hall, Macomb, IL 61455)

At TLC we support the development of emergent writing by resourcing the environment with writing implements paper and paints. Writing opportunities are provided in all the areas from the home area to the outside. A print rich environment provides provocation and opportunities to copy familiar words

Teacher's take opportunity to model writing whenever possible . They are encouraging at a child's attempt at writing whatever stage they are at. Teacher's ask what the child want the writing to say and the teacher will then write the correct words underneath if the child wants her to.



"Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on." — Louis L'Amour



We not only respect babies, we demonstrate our respect every time we interact with them. Respecting a child means treating even the youngest infant as a unique human being, not as an object

Magda Gerber

Pickups and 'pick me ups' by Elena



Like drop offs the end of the day 'pick ups' brings challenges for children, parents and teachers alike. Observing some of the end of day frustrations in recent months brought to mind those moments that push(ed) my buttons from green to red in 10 seconds. The ones where you try and calm your voice, use simple sentences and even call their name to draw their attention. Your face muscles however, and body tension contradict the carefully enunciated words that you speak quite clearly but still your child clearly CHOOSES TO IGNORE! Conscious that everyone around you can hear and see what is about to unfold as the tension mounts. Familiar at all?

It's the end of a long day and you have come to fetch your child, who was so sad to say goodbye and now amidst the collection of bags, shoes, runaway siblings, you are having to 'negotiate' the goodbye's. Conscious that it's your turn to make dinner, bath time is still not a favourite pastime and books to read before settling to bed...and this on a good night as there is no need for an emergency stop to the dairy on the way home.

As teachers, the awkwardness is about should, or shouldn't we intervene. While trying to be respectful of not wanting to get in the middle of the parent child relationship, we are hyper aware of the ensuing power struggle if left for too long, and therefore sometimes we choose to step inthe art is knowing when is the right time and how to do so, something that is constantly evolving, with each child on each day and in each situation and no, we don't always get it right.

The reality is that we too face this challenge in our daily practice. It certainly has been a journey for me. Particularly in the beginning years of working with

toddlers, before I appreciated the struggle between impulse, logic and emotion as they come to know who they are, develop their sense of will while they navigate the muddy waters of emotions and logic. Being 'ignored' or so I blithely thought was one of the journeys I have had.

These days however, I like to think that on most days rather than take it personally, I take a deep B R E A T H . I have learned a truth....that the way toddlers handle transitions is an interplay between development and temperament (Davis & Keyser, 1997) and mood I add. My challenge? To try and work out the strategy that achieves the desired outcome without an ensuing power struggle and yes sometimes this means reassessing my priorities.

I confess too that patience is highly desirable; a virtue that I continually need to practice and the children have no qualms about testing my progress... It is then that the school marm within comes out of the closet! In my case it, it took a rambunctious toddler who used to love nappy changes to show me that a little perspective was in order. It never ceases to amaze me at how forgiving children are. This child is already in school and each time he comes to visit, he makes time to say hello. My smile not only reflects the pleasure I have in seeing him again but also of all the lessons he taught me; I will never forget the moment I felt the burden of my impatience. The degree of reluctance and hesitation to come with me , even if fleeting, is what pierced. It was only that I became conscious of this that I could reflect and try some of the strategies offered to us in the literature.

Many awful things have been done in the name of love, but nothing awful can be done in the name of respect.

Magda Gerber

Pickups and ‘pick me ups’continued

The reality is that when children ignore us they are choosing to pay attention to something else that is more important to them at the moment; digging in the sandpit , mastering how to use a shovel, to build that volcano, engage you in a game of hide and seek that you have been doing on the weekend. Or, my favourite, is to see the younger siblings, who have been picked up first , running with sheer exhilaration at being able to explore this BIGGER and NEW environment.

In these moments, these things are more important than responding to you; they might even like to obeyyou see it in how they sometimes slow down for that nanosecond, look at you from the corner of their eye, their cues for having heard you but right now that comes second to their own agenda. “It’s more like, I heard what you said. However that’s not relevant” (Davis & Keyser, 1997, P258).

Helping to find the last piece of the puzzle or racing their hot wheel around their body is far more compelling than getting dressed even if they know how to do this as that was ‘yesterday’s struggle - the one where you tried to help amidst the screams of ‘my do it! I’ve come to think of this as ‘the avoiding the mundane’. They know how to do these things now, mastered them even and therefore the challenge no longer exists. They are still learning that these things are a means to an end. That you get to the picnic if you finish dressing etc.

Naturally responses will vary depending on the child’s age, (language we use and what is understood etc) what is keeping them focused and their attention away but there are a few strategies that can be interwoven into your repertoire.

- **honour the impulse.** Appreciating that a child’s interest is as important to him as your wishes are even if yours may need to take precedence is a good starting point. Take that breath and view the world through their eyes. Observe or ask. “Even staring off into

space can be a valid agenda for a child whose life has been ‘busy’. The children have been away from home for as long as you have, working on theories, forging and testing relationships, negotiating their way throughout the day.

- **Move in closer, get on their level and make eye contact.** Getting down to the child’s level not only helps to see what they are doing but may make it easier to be listened to. With some children I have found that touching their arm or holding their hands, not in restraint, but more to bring them to focus to let them feel with their being that there is no animosity in my body just a desire to form a connection
- **Let them know that you have been actively listening or observing.** “I can see you would rather be in the sandpit than going to pick up your brother...”
- **Use I statements...Own it.** Let them know how you feel. “I get frustrated when I ask you to stop ...and you don’t look at me or answer ..”
- **Set a limit AND MEAN IT.** ‘you can play with the digger for 5 more minutes but then it will be time to collect your things and fetch your brother’.
- **Offer choices.** ‘Do you want to give the shovel to..or put it away yourself’ or ‘ Can you do it yourself or would you like some help”.
- **Negotiate a win - win solution.** This requires compromise and listening . “I can see you still want to play with that digger...before dinner their will be some time...’
- **Invite initiative (and or participation).** Children have an increasing capacity to problem solve so invite them to do so. “You want to keep playing with Nina and we have to fetch your sister, what can we do?” For young toddlers inviting them to participate is a great strategy for it aligns with their increasing need for taking on more responsibility.

Pickups and 'pick me ups' continued

- Reinforce verbal limits with physical ones**
- if necessary.** If things are going to turn to custard - this is it. When children can't choose, stop to listen etc they may need help. It is our responsibility as adults to know when to step in. To set the limits and boundaries for they provide structure - guidelines if you will, of what is acceptable and what is not. Of course children need time to process these (difficult) requests. An inherent part of our philosophy is waiting, giving them this time but at the same time respect is a two way street. Repeating yourself five or 6 times, stretching 5 minutes into fifteen and even distracting them by impersonating characters or flying tactics only serve to let them know ' hey if I don't listen then I get to play longer or get tickled ..' Learning to listen and respond back and that there are limits and boundaries are fundamental. Without this the child learns more about disrespect. Pushing boundaries and testing limits is what children do...we adults are their social experiment at times. 'I wonder what will happen if....?' This is usually where I as teacher will step in. Especially if I already have an established relationship with the children and parents. 'Your mum is needing to go fetch your brother, you need to pack it away or give it to me....would you like to walk or shall I carry you'.

This is however where the theory stops ...for me knowing the child, what strategies they are working on, and what is still in their repertoire, using my

internal traffic light of red, green and yellow to guide me as what is negotiable and what is not, their emotional well-being - are they tired, feeling unwell also need to be taken into account. At the end of a long day is insisting that they put on their shoes by themselves really so important?



Infancy is a vulnerable stage of development, therefore, it's not enough that babies receive good care, the care must be excellent.

Magda Gerber
Founder
Resources for Infant Educarers®

Meet the members of the Parents Voice Committee

The PVC are a group of TLC parents who meet monthly with members of the TLC team. Our purpose is to support the teaching and management team in realising the vision and philosophy of The Learning Centre (TLC) as they care for enrolled children.

The PVC has been in operation for about 5 years, and during this time, TLC's management and teaching team's needs for the PVC have changed, and indeed many of our family's/whanau needs of the PVC have changed. Therefore, we recently took the opportunity to review the Committee's objectives.

The objectives of the PVC in 2016 are to:

- Facilitate parental support of the the strategic and operational plans of TLC
- Support open, constructive and informative communication between the TLC Management team and the parent community
- Support the development of an active, informed and connected parent community
- Enhance the experience children have at TLC by providing access to skills, time and resources available in the parent community or their networks
- Committee members and representation

We like to have a mixture of parents on the PVC representing families/whanau with children in the upstairs environment (He Kaakano and Weka), as well as Kea, and Tui children (downstairs).



The PVC currently have the following parents sitting on the committee (pictured from left to right); Kathryn Hall (Secretary), mum of Olivia (He Kaakano), Sarah Ram, mum of Francesca (Tui) - has now stepped down , Tanya Diamond (Chair) – back, mum of Archie (Tui), Rebecca Holdsworth – front, mum of Remy (He Kaakano) and Jarvis (Tui), John Mauro, dad of Madeline (He Kaakano), Rebecca Roughan, mum of Zoe (Weka) and Birdie (Tui), Bonnie Shanahan (not pictured), mum of Daniel (Kea). **Would you like to get involved?**

RIE parenting could be summed up as an awareness of our babies. We perceive and acknowledge them to be unique, separate people. We enhance our awareness by observing them — allowing them the bit of space they need to show us who they are and what they need.

Janet Lansbury

About the PVC cont.

The PVC are always delighted to welcome more parent members. We meet at TLC on the first Wednesday of each month, from 7:30 – 9pm over dinner (and often a glass of wine!) Here is what Katherine had to say:

"I was interested in being able to contribute to the PVC and then met a current team member Bec who told me a little more about it and how it is a great chance to meet other like minded parents as part of the process"

Did you know?

This is a new section in our newsletter, where we hope to give you more insight into TLC with some quick facts.

Did you know that out of 75% of our permanent teachers (9 out of 12) have had completed specialist RIE training?

Did you know that in order to work with infants and toddlers at TLC, we require this training? TLC is sending Laura Sio next month to Seattle to do this training with Polly Elam, our mentor and the President of the RIE organisation (see <https://www.rie.org/about/board-of-directors/>) When Laura returns, 10 out of 12 teachers, 83% will have had specialist RIE training.

Dates for your diary

May	June
Centre wide transition visits start Monday 9th May Next centre wide cohort transition date Monday 30th May 2016 Working Bee - Saturday 28th May 14:00-17:00	Matariki 2016 starts on the 6th of June - we usually celebrate this on the closest Thursday, which would be the 8th of June . We currently organising this event, and are open to suggestions for how we can make this better for yo - let us know what you think we should do.

End of Year Close Down Mon 26th Dec - Fri 6th Jan 2017

We are responding to your feedback during the last survey that some of you thought that TLC could do with a little more maintenance/TLC and 'refreshing'. One of the only times we can reasonably do this, is during the annual closedown. Therefore this year, we will close for two complete weeks.





Celebrate
Matariki
2016 with
TLC

***When: Thursday 9th June
17:00 - 18:30***

Hot Dogs & chips: \$5

