



A personal reflection

Elena Marouchos

CREATING A CULTURE OF CARE THROUGH CONTINUITY...



Highlighting Intelligence, Integrity, Skill & Knowledge

By Sanna

We had so much interest in Elena's presentation at the Childspace conference a couple weeks back, and we thank you for your lovely feedback. Elena of course was grumpy at the photos I chose to share, but my motivation in sharing them with you all was to highlight to intelligence, integrity, skill and knowledge the women who teach our children here at TLC have. I have two children at TLC (soon to be three, yikes!), and on any given day I am confronted with another way of 'seeing' my children through the reflections their teachers share with me, and in the daily discussions we have in the staff room.

I've been thinking a lot about how we share this type of information with you, the rest of the parents of TLC children. I am hyper-aware of my privileged position having immediate access to feedback about my children and how they spend their day. I scan daily through the Educa posts that our teachers provide and wonder how or if we could be doing this at a deeper level so that you have some of the immediate access to the joy I have.

Documenting children's learning: What is the best way forward for you as a parent? Short, sharp snippets of information with a few pertinent photos attached? Or lovely long stories about learning on a deeper level. What do you have time to look at each day and what do you have time to feed back about so you and your child's teacher can start or continue a

dialogue about what is happening for your child?

One of the workshops that Elena, Ania and I attended at the conference was on Learning Stories, one of the main ways we document learning in the Early Childhood profession. For the longest time, Early Childhood Teachers have been on a quest to be seen as professionals (not baby-sitters with degrees!) and the way in which we document has projected that - often clinical, with lots of industry buzzwords and proof that hey, we know what we are talking about! But the main message I took from the workshop was that as early childhood teachers, we are in a fortunate position to be with children for a far longer time than any of your child's future teachers will. We have the good fortune of seeing your children at their absolute best, as well as being part of a journey through some really challenging stages (any parent who has ever had a child go through a biting stage will know what I mean!). We put your babies to bed, and share meals with them. We change their nappies and we help them learn about their bodies and how to keep them clean and safe. I've even caught Elena taking her morning tea break with my son Moe (and lots of your babies too), just because he was sad and clearly needed some one on one time. There is an incredible that we have on hand in the Parent Library called 'We Are Not Robots!' and I have to agree: We love them in your absence.

When you show deep empathy toward others, their defensive energy goes down, and positive energy replaces it. That's when you can get more creative in solving problems

Stephen Covey

Highlighting Intelligence, Integrity, Skill & Knowledge cont.

So how is this shown to you as parents? Is it not our job to not only document the typical learning that happens at this level but also all relationships we have with them and what those look like on a daily basis? What about when that day finally comes that your baby does not cry at drop off - is this not as important a learning outcome in the same way mastering a new puzzle is? And the day your child figures out they do not need to bite or hair pull to get what they need - what about celebrating this learning that has occurred? Your child coping with change, a transition perhaps to centre life from being at home previously or going into a new group. **THIS** is the learning. The incredible journey from wearing nappies to gradually knowing and being responsible for changing one's self, and understanding when to stop playing, and head to the toilet. **THIS** is the learning. The deep bonds that these children have with their specific teacher - the person they choose over everyone else, the relationships we value so much that we plan our own holidays around them, making sure that everyone in our groups are settled and secure so that we can be away from the centre knowing they will continue to feel secure. Look at your child's portfolio. Are the photos of these incredibly important people? Are you children going to be able to look back and say, "I loved going to TLC because of **THAT** person."?

Every day teachers celebrate and applaud these delicious outcomes and then we keep them to ourselves, thinking that these type of developments are not the ones you wish to read about. My challenge to the teachers is that they **ARE** the kinds of things you wish to read about. My daughter Minna is about to head off to school, there is literally no other person outside our immediate family who have known her like Ania and Tamaki have. These people have been in her life since she was 7 months old. Why **WOULDN'T** they document about the friendship and love they have had for my daughter over the past four and half years? They know her better than her extended family! Never again in her life will she have teachers like this, who have seen her through the biting phase, the pushing phase, the 'new big sister' phase, the toilet learning phase, and the 'I can write my own name' phase. I would love to hear your thoughts and feedback about your expectations for your child's learning portfolio. My hope is that you too will appreciate the hours of work, love and thought that goes into them, and maybe even discuss with your child's teacher that they document also to reflect the beautiful relationships we have with them.



Thank you to everyone who made our Matariki celebrations another huge success. Thanks in particular to our parent voice committee for organising this wonderful event.



What Literacy Looks Like In Early Childhood

By Zoe

Here at TLC we use the 'Casey the Caterpillar' literacy program. Barbara Bran created this program to support early handwriting development, foundations for literacy, spelling and learning difficulties. This is a simple process to develop correct letter formation in a meaningful and fun way. The Casey program is designed to ensure that children develop the foundational skills for literacy including phonological and phonemic awareness, motor skills, print concepts and oracy.

Did you know that before children can formally learn they need to have mastered 228 sub-skills! These skills are interwoven throughout the five domains of literacy; moving, talking, looking, listening and print. 'Motor' is the most important domain at this age an early childhood level. Crawling, the first steps, body awareness, balance, rhythm, crossing the midline, confidence, hand eye co-ordination, cutting and pasting, manipulation and construction: Without integrating these fine and gross muscle movements how are children able to enable appropriate movement responses? Crossing the midline is how we practice and develop true handedness being ambidextrous is cool but isn't it better to have one amazing hand rather than two average hands!?

Here at TLC we provide a rich and challenging environment for gross motor development particularly outside with monkey bars, rope ladder, giant spider web, tree climbing, space, jump zones, balance beams and dancing etc. We also provide lego, play dough, carpentry, pegs etc as well as a rich art area resourced with tools to support fine motor development; scissors, pencils, paint brushes, chalk and crayons. We do not use felt markers as they require no pressure, so it is too easy to make a mark. These tools also develop hand

eye dominance, hand and finger control, correct three finger tripod grip and the ability to cross the midline and use both hands simultaneously to complete tasks. Talking or competence

with oracy is the bedrock for future success with literacy and is of fundamental importance to a person's education and ability to communicate their thinking and participate in life opportunities. We respectfully listen and encourage talking. More often than not we don't need to encourage this to your chatty children however!

When we talk about 'Looking', we are actually talking about vision perception which is a learned

process. It is the ability to interpret information that comes through the eyes and from which emerges an understanding of what is seen, where it is and how to react to it. What we do here at TLC is notice, recognise and respond to children and our environment. We don't just read a story, we look closely at the pictures, find specific detail or objects. We classify same and not the same (different). This will in turn support noticing the difference between these letters p, b, d, q.

'Listening' is about interpreting and responding to what is heard. Efficient listening skills form the foundation needed for successful manipulation of sounds in words, a skill for both reading and spelling. This is phonemic awareness. Phonological awareness is understanding that sounds and print letters are connected or words are made up of sound units. We play with sounds constantly here at TLC, give short instruction to be followed, listen to sounds in the environment to be identified... a mower in the park, birds, we sing and dance.



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What Literacy Looks Like In Early Childhood .. cont.

By Zoe

TLC provides a print rich environment just look around, print is everywhere!

Please keep in mind that the human brain likes information to be familiar, meaningful, predictable and patterned therefore the more familiar, meaningful, predictable and patterned information is the easier it is to take in (receive) store (retain) and to access (recall) it. For short term memory it can take 12-15 repetitions to store information. Overloading children with information or instructions results in them dealing with the first thing heard, or the last thing heard or possibly selecting the most interesting thing heard. So let's not overload or pressure our children and let their literacy unfold naturally. Remember, once they get to school they will soak up all the more formal knowledge they need for literacy and will do so well with the solid foundations they learn here at TLC.

the child's disposition and attitudes, e.g. willingness to try new things, to take instruction, etc

the child's feelings about school, often in the context of having friends at school

- **an understanding of the rules**
- **the child's self-care ability**
- **the ability for the child to separate from the parent**

At TLC we believe strongly in helping children "to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society." Te Whariki – ECE national curriculum.

Strong learning dispositions is one way we assess readiness in children, the ability to show an interest (curiosity), get oneself involved (not standing back all the time), persevering with challenges, (problem solving, risk taking, persistence), communicating ideas through a variety of media, and taking responsibility for oneself, resources and the group (independence,

interdependence and social skills).

We believe strongly that with these learning dispositions in place, then children are in a great position to learn. We are therefore concerned that a push for formalised schooling before a child is ready can weaken these dispositions.

All the RIE principles help children develop these learning dispositions and to see themselves as strong competent learners.

Through the Casey the caterpillar foundations we also work on foundations for literacy and writing.

We are carrying on Robyn's work with building relationships with the local schools and we hope to develop a greater partnership and sharing of pedagogical practices. We suggest to parents to advocate for children to have at least three visits to help them gain some understanding of what school is like.

Fortunately in New Zealand there is some choice available. Times are changing so I am always worried if I enter a classroom that is similar as when I went to school. Remember the legal required age for a child to start school in New Zealand is 6 years old - not 5 - so there is no hurry to leave TLC if you decide you want a slower introduction to formal learning for your child - and we strongly recommend leaving it as long as you can! Schooling is such an important area that we suggest that parents do some research, not just rely on the fact that you live close to the local school. There are great discussions to be had about what you value for your child's education, what did you like about your own schooling and what you didn't like, what helped you the most?



So let's not overload or pressure our children and let their literacy unfold naturally.

Boys Will Be Boys

By Nikki

A few months ago I was fortunate to attend a one-day workshop entitled “Boys’ learning and well-being in early childhood education”. I have been interested in this field for a long time and I am always interested in hearing the latest research on how to provide a high quality play and learning environment that meet the needs of both boys and girls. The research included in the course related to cross-cultural studies about boys’ preferences and learning.

Why is this especially about boys and not girls? Because after a few years at school, more and more boys are switching off to aspects of formal learning. Women tend to teach how they themselves learn and because most primary schools have mostly women teachers, often the teaching is more strongly linked to how girls learn.

The main points that I gained from the course are as follows:

That the gender lines for play preferences amongst boys and girls are not clear cut. At one end of the continuum there are ‘boyish’ boys all the way to more feminine boys and the same is for girls. While most boys and girls are similar, for example 50% of boys and girls



“...Freedom being the sauce best loved by the boyish soul”

Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*

will swap roles, there are some distinctive play preferences.

One of the most interesting things I learnt was about children’s brain development.

As children’s brains develop they are hard wired for certain types of play based on that of our primitive ancestors.

When early people were living, survival was crucial, therefore young boys and girls had to play at (practice) the roles they were to have in life, for girls this was the childrearing, food preparation, and social activities that come with keeping the home (cave). Therefore most girls are innately drawn to this kind of play, which they practice a lot before moving onto to other kinds of play and learning that our larger frontal cortex now allows us to do.

FOR BOYS this means hunting play and with this, the strong interest in novelty, a need for physical activity, a physical response to perceived danger (fight/flight verses talking it through) and a thirst for adventure. The important thing is that young boys need to be able to practice these adult skills, before their brains will move onto higher level thinking and playing. From a schema-learning theory point of view I also attach many boys strong interest in trajectory to this as well. Again this is why we are so passionate about being play based, it is how we are hard-wired to learn.

So when we see young boys (and boyish girls) engaging in rough and tumble, super hero play, gun play and, it is about how we channel this play rather than repress it. Repressing it will only lead to problems later on.

As a society: What messages do we give to boys (and girls) when we tell them their play is not acceptable, how does this affect their self esteem and confidence, as well as the sense of belonging and their feeling about what being a boy is.

Channelling boys play, we do this by providing.... - Opportunities AND Boundaries.

We do this by minimising transitions and having a great outside space, ample resources and time. We give all children time and space to engage in whatever their play preferences are.

HOWEVER we also have clear boundaries. Boys (and girls) like rules and to know what the rules are, and that the rules are fair for everyone.

Our rules are simple: You are not allowed to hurt others or the environment. Our rules for gun play is that you don’t point play guns at people and pretend to shoot. We as a team are firm on these rules, there is no

Boys Will Be Boys continued

By Nikki

compromise. We encourage all children to help us be guardians of each other and TLC.

We watch with fascination as the older boys engage in rough and tumble - gently (most of the time). They observe others children's reactions and adjust their play accordingly. Respect and developing empathy is the key. By being allowed to engage in this kind of play, children are making a multitude of split second decisions about cause and effect and their on-going play, all valuable learning.

Boys enjoy:

- Physical activity (jumping, rolling, running).
- Experiencing (rather than talking).
- Tactile hands on (grabbing, touching, taking)
- Exploring spaces
- Figuring out (by watching and testing)
- System analysis (by taking apart and putting things back together).

Lastly - boys need secure attachments, which is why we have primary caregiving (key teachers) and continuity of care.

AN ASIDE: Boys usually get an increase in testosterone at about two and a half years and four and half years, this means that they can get more aggressive or antsy during this time; physical movement helps their bodies process this testosterone. Many boys at five still have this surge of testosterone which make it hard for them to sit still for long periods of time, also boys' hips are narrower, which means that they are unable to sit still for as long as girls. These both have



implications for boys at school. We often encourage parent of boys to start them a school a few months after they turn five for this reason, usually we find that boys show they are more 'ready' at this stage.

Nikki

There comes a time in every rightly constructed boy's life when he has a raging desire to go somewhere and dig for hidden treasure.

Mark Twain

If infants are ready to do something, they will do it. In fact, when they are ready, they have to do it.
Magda Gerber

A Reflection on Nappy Changes at TLC by Laura

Over the last few months, we at TLC were lucky enough to have Laura Sio on practicum with us upstairs. We were particularly impressed with her writing, and are including one of her reflections in this newsletter with her permission.

Reflection 3 – TLC

20/07/15

By Laura Sio



This reflection relates to the LO's 2.1 and 2.2 in terms of effective communication between Elena, Sofia and myself to best establish a responsive and reciprocal relationship through knowing the child, where they are at and their care routines.

Describe: What did I do?

This afternoon Elena asked me if I'd like to change Sofia's nappy while she observes me. Sofia had been approaching me with books and toys and either smiling or chatting away to me for the most part of the day, so I felt reassured that she'd be comfortable with this. As soon as Elena had handed me the reigns and Sofia was happy in my arms, I felt so flustered and out of my depth! Once I had Sofia's nappy I saw that she was happily crawling the length of the changing table and motioning over to the wooden bars to stand up. My instinct was to try and lie her down, as that's the only way I've ever changed a child or seen it modeled by others (to my now horror) - so I proceeded to try and lie Sofia down while informing her before that I was going to do so. Sofia wasn't impressed and wriggled away determined to stand up again. I knew that I must be doing something different to what Sofia was used to and that's where Elena kindly stepped in.

Inform: What does this mean? Underpinning patterns or principles?

After watching Elena change Sofia and the interactions exchanged between educator and child, I felt all warm and fuzzy inside in all truths. It was such a calming and enjoyable experience for both parties including myself – the observer! Elena changed Sofia in the position that Sofia was happy and naturally in – standing and bopping up and down. What strongly resonated with me during this caring experience was that Elena involved Sofia in the whole nappy changing process. She was an active participant from beginning to end. As Elena started undressing Sofia, she informed Sofia that she was going to pull down her trousers and

asked whether Sofia would like to help her by lifting up her right leg and then her left leg once her trousers had reached her ankle. Sofia was responsive and chatting as she made her way around the outside of the changetable. As Elena was wiping Sofia's bottom she informed Sofia of which leg and side of her bottom she was going to wipe first and that it'd be quite a cold sensation. Elena also asked Sophia if she'd like to try and undo the nappy tags – which they did together. While Sofia was moving and crawling about Elena adjusted Sofia's nappy a few times before it was in a comfortable position for Sofia. From observing Elena and Sofia, I could see how children don't ever shy or run away from a nappy change - because it is so pleasurable. Elena's feedback was insightful in terms of why educators never try and lie a child on their back as they follow the child's lead and their curiosities. As Sofia has just learnt new skills her educators want to embrace these movements by adjusting to her flow and encouraging them further. It makes total sense – why would we dictate the position we want the child to be in and restrict their freedom of movement and not only expect a graceful and resilient nappy change.

Reflect: How did I come to be this way?

I was amazed at how aware and attentive Sofia was to Elena, watching and listening, totally comfortable and engrossed in the experience. Sofia didn't show any sign of distress. I could see that Sofia could anticipate what was coming next by her responses. I feel a little disheartened to think that at trying times when children are unsettled at my centre nappy changing can become mechanical and depersonalised for efficiencies sake. In the short space of five minutes I saw a myriad of learning experiences, playful interactions and especially how a relationship would develop and blossom in these care times. I read the section on diapering by Magda Gerber in the RIE manual to further secure my thoughts and intentions and she suggests to prepare ahead. To have all things for the child you need at the ready as searching for things midway disrupts the continuity of your time together. This can happen all too often when we are not truly present and distracted by other comings and goings, which is why I really admire that there is only one change table and only one child changed at a time. I realise now that explaining what you are going to do step by step regardless of an infants age is important in order for the them to associate your sounds and tone of voice with your gesture and actions as anticipation will develop in time.

A Reflection on Nappy Changes at TLC by Laura

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Reconstruct: How might I do things differently?

I read in the RIE manual that some of the key outcomes for nappy changing promote positive self-

esteem, body awareness, social attentiveness and responsiveness. In my next few nappy changes I want the crux of my actions to be driven from a place of 'how can I make this pleasurable for the child' and knowing where the child is at.



Every baby moves with more ease and efficiency if allowed to do it at his own time and in his own way, without our trying to teach him. A child who has always been allowed to move freely develops not only an agile body but also good judgment about what he can and cannot do.

Magda Gerber



Helen's Amazing Cassoulet (a lunchtime favourite!)

Cassoulet, that best of bean feasts, is everyday fare for a peasant but ambrosia for a gastronome, though its ideal consumer is a 300-pound blocking back who has been splitting firewood nonstop for the last twelve hours on a subzero day in Manitoba.

Julia Child



Ingredients:
 1 leek or onion
 2 stalks celery
 fresh rosemary
 organic lamb sausages
 4 rashers chopped bacon
 2 carrots
 4 potatoes
 litre or more of chicken stock
 tablespoon butter
 cornflour to thicken
 2 x cans of butter beans
 lots of fresh parsley

Bake lamb sausages until done. Sweat leeks, celery and rosemary in butter or oil until soft.

Throw into a big heavybottomed pot with chopped bacon, carrots, potatoes, chicken stock.

Mix, and thicken with cornflour and butter if needed. Add butter beans.

Bake in the pot until veges are soft (45 mins to an hour), then mix in fresh parsley. Serve with garlic mashed

potatoes for a real treat!

The TLC children LOVE this meal! (And so do the teachers!)

Also - check our Helen's

INCREDIBLE jewellery: <http://helenholmes.net/category/jewellery/>

A pioneer in research on play, Dr. Stuart Brown says humor, games, roughhousing, flirtation and fantasy are more than just fun. Plenty of play in childhood makes for happy, smart adults — and keeping it up can make us smarter at any age.

http://www.ted.com/talks/stuart_brown_says_play_is_more_than_fun_it_s_vital?language=en

Dates for your diary

October	November	December	January
TLC Community Survey will be sent out.	Grandparents and Special Person's Day Date TBC	TLC End of Year Party. Date TBC. TLC Closes: Friday Mid-day 12:00 the 25th December.	TLC Re-opens Tuesday 5th of January.

Information regarding our Christmas and New Year Closedown: Due to how the public holidays fall this year, we will effectively only be closed for one week. For those of you who pay an averaged monthly invoice based on 50 chargeable weeks in the year, I will only invoice for the extra week if your child actually attends in the first week of 2016, and this will be done as an extra days invoice.

Liza Savage Photography

Liza Savage is an award winning photographer who is passionate about family photography. Her style is off-the-cuff, and truly captures emotions and moments in a relaxed way. Her sessions are fun and all about connecting as a family. If your family photographs are in need of updating and you would like them to be unique and beautiful, visit:

<http://photos.lizasavage.co.nz/>

