

March 2024

ISSUE 4

TECZINE



TOILET LEARNING

Environments

TE REO MAORI

Social Emotional

BOOK REVIEW

IN THIS EDITION

This is our first newsletter for a while. There was so much disruption during the pandemic and, while the first lockdown in 2020 resulted in a bumper newsletter as everyone worked on it from home, ultimately the TLCZine was another casualty of the disruption.

Environments Stephanie looks at the role of the environment | the Reggio Emilia philosophy, and in the RIE philosophy

Social Emotional Learning Janine writes about social emotional learning, its importance and what it looks like in ECE.

Toileting Mikayla writes about Toilet Learning, and what this looks like at TLC

First Impressions Morgan gives us her first impressions of TLC

Te Reo Journey Mikayla talks about her Te Reo journey

Gardens For Young Children Marie talks about her project to write a book about suitable gardens for young children.

Wellbeing Project Dixie introduces herself, and talks about why wellbeing is so important to her.

Children's Book Reviews Tor (Luca's mum) reviews a couple of Luca's favourite books de jour.

TLC Dates for your diaries Important upcoming TLC dates for you



MARCH
2024

Magda Gerber

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU
TEACH;
IT MAY INTERFERE WITH
WHAT THEY'RE LEARNING.

RE-BOOTING THE TLC NEWSLETTER

Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and shadows will fall behind you. *Walt Whitman*

After four really tough years of disruption, it is time to turn our collective face towards the sunshine, and put our energies and focus on the things that make TLC really special.

One of those things, is our Parent Voice Committee, which met again this month for the first time in ages. We plan to meet again quarterly going forward, with the next meeting in June. This is one of main ways to hear the voice of whānau in our community. To make it more accessible to all whānau, including as Sanna puts it 'autonomous parents', we have re-organised it so that it starts at 5:00pm, and to enable everyone to be able to attend if they wish to, we are arranging for care for children at TLC if whānau need that.

Another thing we are restarting, is our Newsletter, but again, we are doing it slightly differently. Our aim is to produce an issue quarterly, and for the leadership team to contribute an article for each issue. We will ask Kaiako to contribute one article per year, and provide additional paid time to write this on top of Kaiako's paid Child Documentation time.

So, welcome to our inaugural rebooted newsletter issue, and please do provide any advice and guidance for how this newsletter can provide value to our community.

"Our role is to create an environment in which the child can do all the things the child would do naturally. The misleading thing about this is that it sounds so easy."

Magda Gerber

In this issue, we have an article from **Stephanie**, around an area of particular interest for her, **the centre environment**, and its role as 'the third teacher'. Since its inception, I have had a vision for TLC as being as homely, and 'non-institutional' as possible, and for our outdoor environment to be as green and 'natural' as possible too. Stephanie is undertaking a project to review our environment, to ensure it is thoughtful and

consciously chosen. Our community's feedback and suggestions, are, as always, very very welcome.

"Everything is social emotional"

Magda Gerber

Janine has written an article all around **the social emotional** learning that is so important throughout our lives. The Eureka moment for me with regards to the RIE® Philosophy, AKA Magda Gerber's Educaring® Approach, was when I realised how everything in the philosophy came back to, and supported the social and emotional learning of children.

As a leadership team, we have had an increasing appreciation of importance of the social emotional, and the importance of WHY Kaiako have chosen ECE. It is **emotional work** due to the importance of relationships and attachment, particularly **healthy secondary attachment**. See [We're Not Robots](#) by Enid Elliot

This has led to an intensity of focus with what we look for in Kaiako. In the past, I have valued ECE teachers who have done a different degree, and then they chose ECE as their career, doing a Graduate Diploma. Some of the most amazing teachers we have had, have taken his route, and what I saw was a maturity, a wider world view, and, and a conscious choice of Early Childhood Education as where they can make the most difference to children, and the world. Which was why the following quote was always one of *their* favourites:

"World peace begins on the change table"

*Ute Strub,
Master Pikler® Trainer and physiotherapist
who worked closely with Dr. Emmi Pikler*

This was an *assumption* of mine though, and we were lucky we ended up with a team with the same strong sense of shared mission and shared values with the children at the heart of all concerns and decisions. We have learnt, we need to find out people's 'WHY' explicitly.

Therefore, another way we are turning our face to the sun, is that **we are reviewing our philosophy statement** (not our philosophy, that remains the same) but, our document explaining and communicating our philosophy to ensure everyone in the TLC community shares a common understanding. We have started by asking all our staff their 'WHY' and Stephanie is compiling this into a 'manifesto' that will assist us in our Philosophy Statement review, at which point we will also reach out to the community, so watch that space.

"What you teach is yourselves"

Magda Gerber

The other change, is *what* we look for while recruiting, and, why it has taken us so long to find the 'right' teachers. **We are looking for people who share our values, who see, and appreciate, the critical importance of the social emotional learning for children. People who share our WHY.** People who 'get' how utterly central social emotional learning is to everything we do.

Who we ARE, our own understanding of ourselves, our motives (our WHY) ultimately, **is** what we teach.

A huge part of *my* learning in this respect has been watching one of our Kaiako's journey, from Psychology graduate, to one of the best Early Childhood Teachers I have had the honour of working with. It has been my respect for this Kaiako, and her journey, that has prompted recruiting Dixie, and now Mya.

"You have to do what you believe in. You have to believe in what you do."

Magda Gerber

Mikayla has two articles in this newsletter, the first is around her personal **Te Reo Journey**, the other is a consistent favourite ~ **Toilet Learning**.

"Readiness is an important concept"

Magda Gerber

I have asked **Dixie** to undertake a 'meta analysis' project. To research what evidence there is, and what studies have been done around **the importance of the natural world for wellbeing**. In this first newsletter Dixie introduces this, and how it ties in with her own interests.

"I now go to places and can see immediately if people understand the spirit of the approach even if they do things differently from the way I would."

Magda Gerber

I asked **Morgan**, who has 10 years of Early Childhood Teaching experience, including management, before joining TLC, to write a little about her **first impressions of TLC**.

"Fantasy should always be boundless."

Magda Gerber

At the Parent Voice Committee, **Tor** kindly agreed to do **a book review** of some books she has recently been enjoying with Luca.

"You don't have to teach. You don't have to buy more gadgets. You don't have to do anything. Both of you can just exist and enjoy the relationship between you."

Magda Gerber

I have also added a little article on the (very very slow) progress on my book about **gardens for children**, and some of the things I have recently enjoyed learning in this regard.

Finally, we have included **a calendar of significant events** in the next quarter, and where appropriate, year ahead.

I genuinely hope you enjoy this newsletter, and as always, your feedback is welcome, and indeed gratefully received. Let us know of topics you would like us to cover in future newsletters.

Nāku iti noa, nā

Marie

THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

BY STEPHANIE

I am very fortunate to have spent the majority of my early childhood career in Reggio Emilia-inspired centres. This wondrous journey has not only shaped my understanding of the profound impact environments can have but also instilled in me a passion for sharing this knowledge. From the intricate design of spaces to the thoughtful selection of materials, I have witnessed first-hand how environments can inspire creativity, curiosity, and growth in children.

In early childhood settings, environments play a pivotal role in shaping young minds and fostering holistic development. Rooted in principles of respect, inquiry, and collaboration, both Reggio Emilia and the Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) philosophies emphasize the profound impact of the environment on children's learning and growth. Recognising the environment as the 'third teacher', these approaches prioritize the design, organisation, and ambiance of early childhood centres to provide optimal conditions for exploration, discovery, wonder and meaningful interactions.

REGGIO EMILIA: THE ENVIRONMENT AS THE THIRD TEACHER



Originating in the Italian town of Reggio Emilia after World War II, the Reggio Emilia approach views the environment as a dynamic entity that actively engages children in constructing knowledge and understanding of the world around them. In Reggio-inspired early childhood centres, spaces are thoughtfully curated to provoke curiosity and wonder, encourage collaboration, and stimulate creativity.

The physical environment in Reggio Emilia-inspired centres are typically characterized by open, flexible spaces adorned with natural materials, ample sunlight, and aesthetically pleasing elements. Walls serve as canvases for children's expressions, displaying their artwork and documentation of learning journeys and project work. Resources are carefully selected to inspire inquiry and



problem-solving, inviting children to explore various textures, colours, and shapes.

Furthermore, **the Reggio Emilia philosophy emphasizes the role of the environment in fostering relationships and social interactions.** Spaces are designed to promote communication, cooperation, and empathy among children, educators, and families. Collaborative projects and group discussions flourish within inviting environments peppered with provocations that encourage dialogue, negotiation, and shared experiences.

“There are three teachers of children; adults, other children, and their physical environment”

Louis Malaguzzi

RIE® PHILOSOPHY: NURTURING RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENTS

In parallel, the RIE® philosophy, developed by Hungarian Magda Gerber, underscores the significance of creating 'Yes' environments that honour infants and toddlers as competent, curious individuals capable of self-directed learning. Central to the RIE® approach is the concept of respect, which permeates every aspect of the environment, from physical surroundings to adult-child interactions.

RIE-inspired environments prioritize simplicity, order, and safety, providing infants and toddlers with unhurried, uninterrupted opportunities for exploration and discovery.



THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT ~ CONTINUED

Low shelves showcase open-ended materials that invite independent play and encourage autonomy. Soft, neutral colours and natural lighting create soothing atmospheres conducive to relaxation and exploration.

“Every moment is an opportunity to observe, to enjoy, to appreciate the environment children are in, and to provide a space where they can thrive and develop to their fullest potential”

Magda Gerber

Moreover, the RIE philosophy emphasizes the importance of mindful caregiving practices within the environment. Educators adopt an observational stance, attuning to children's cues and interests, and responding sensitively to their needs. By fostering secure attachments and trustful relationships, RIE® environments become nurturing spaces where children feel valued, understood, and supported in their developmental journeys.



THE INTERSECTION: INTEGRATING REGGIO EMILIA AND RIE PRINCIPALS

While distinct in their origins and emphases, Reggio Emilia and RIE® philosophies share common ground in their reverence for the environment as a catalyst for learning and growth. Both approaches prioritize environments that honour children's agency, curiosity, and intrinsic motivation, fostering a sense of belonging, wonder, and empowerment.

By integrating principals from Reggio Emilia and RIE® philosophies, early childhood centres can create holistic environments that nurture children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. **Thoughtfully designed spaces, characterised by beauty, order and respect**, serve as dynamic platforms for inquiry, exploration, and meaningful connections with the world and each other.

A NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT: TE WHĀRIKI - THE NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM.

Influenced by these philosophies New Zealand's national early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki, highlights the significance of a rich, stimulating, and culturally responsive environment that supports children's

exploration, creativity, and sense of belonging. Also acknowledging the environment as the 'third teacher', offering opportunities for children to also engage with nature, build connections with their surroundings, and develop a deep respect for the natural world.

“The physical and emotional environment is seen as the ‘third teacher’ and is carefully planned to foster exploration, investigation, and discovery.”

Te Whāriki

In conclusion, the environments within early childhood centres hold profound significance in shaping children's experiences, perspectives, and relationships. Drawing inspiration from Reggio Emilia and RIE philosophies, teachers can cultivate environments that ignite curiosity, foster autonomy, and cultivate a deep appreciation for the wonders of learning and growth. By recognizing the environment as the 'third teacher,' early childhood settlements can truly become transformative spaces where every child is seen, heard, and valued.

“The environment should act as an aquarium which reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes and culture of the people who live in it. This is what we are working towards”

Louis Malaguzzi



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

JANINE BROOKER

~

THE HEART OF OUR PHILOSOPHY IS RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the foundation that builds our practice and shapes everything we do at TLC.

"RIE offers the tools with which to translate the idea of respect into action when caring for infants and toddlers. It is an integrated, multilayered approach that balances the need for freedom with the need for secure relationships."

(Ruth Anne Hammond, Respecting Babies, quoting Magda Gerber).

Secure attachments build positive, nurturing experiences which seem to reinforce certain pathways in the brain. Healthy attachment develops when caregivers are consistent and responsive; relationships are primary to development.

(Gonzalez Mena, Widenmyer Eyer, pg 105).

When you have developed a secure attachment with a child in your care, you have effectively connected important brain neurons, and the child has an understanding that they can separate from their parents and know that their needs will be met by this other person. To build this connection we need to form relationships.

These relationships are varied and form a holistic learning and development for each child. They are unique and individualised and grow over time during interactions with the significant people in a child's life.

RELATIONSHIPS - NGA HONONGA

Children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things. Te Whāriki, 2017

So when you think about relationships in Early Childhood you may think of the obvious one of teacher and child.

There are of course many relationships in group care and each one builds a strong foundation of trust and security for the child. At TLC we have a programme that is centred around a key teacher approach to working with our infants and toddlers. This key kaiako role used to be referred to as a 'primary caregiver', but now we recognise that parents are the child's primary caregiver and we are in more of a secondary role.

So what is a key kaiako programme and why do we value this approach? I believe it comes back to RELATIONSHIPS and forming ATTACHMENTS.

For example, when we look at some of the important relationships that surround the child, we can see how they nurture the child's wellbeing, form those attachments and make the families feel secure in the knowledge that their child is well cared for in a quality environment. Some of these include the following.

KAIAKO & TAMARIKI

When caregivers react in sensitive, responsive ways to meet each baby's individual needs the baby will feel valued and worthwhile. Observing, asking, adapting, communicating and responding are key behaviours that make up responsive care. This also means waiting for a response and using that response in the next action. This reinforces responsiveness in caregiving practice.

(Beverly Kovach, Denise Da Ros-Voseles)

For example, moving around the front of a child, holding up a tissue and saying "I would like to wipe your nose now". Then holding the tissue steady and waiting for the child to respond. When they agree to this, they move their heads forward slightly and hold still. When they disagree they move their heads away from you as a sign they don't want this to happen. If the teacher needs to follow through with the nose wiping. She may say, "I can see that you don't want me to do this right now, but I can see the snot is going in your mouth, so I'm going to wipe it. I'm sorry, I know you don't want me to do this.....thank you for holding still."

This interaction shows the kaiako is respecting the child's personal space and giving them a chance to share their feelings about having their nose wiped. They are waiting for a response for the child and inviting participation without giving the child a choice. When the child indicates they don't want the wiping done, the kaiako, acknowledges this, explains briefly why it has to happen, apologises and also thanks the child for holding still at the end.



KAIAKO & TAMARIKI

Key Caregivers work in partnership with parents, communicating daily to build mutual understanding and trust.

Key Caregivers listen carefully to what parents say about their children and seek to understand the families goals and preferences. They discuss this with the secondary caregiver so there is consistency in the care and education.

Key caregivers and families confer in making decisions about the best way to support children's development or handle problems or differences of opinions as they arise. (Gonzalez Mena & Widmeyer Eyer, pg 282)

For example, changes in sleep routines.

Infants and toddlers go through many changes over the first three years. Their developmental growth is huge and their changes in their behaviours grow and evolve from dependence to independence to interdependence and often back again.

Their sleep patterns change, their food preferences change and will often go from being famished all the time.....to hardly eating at all. Their peer relationships are changing as they learn how they fit in a social world.

As toddlers become more self aware, independent and autonomous parents and caregivers need to work together to provide developmentally appropriate boundaries that keep children safe physically, emotionally and socially. All the while acknowledging, supporting and respecting the needs and urges of a toddler who is constantly learning.

Working together as a teaching team and welcoming whanau to come and be part of the settling process for their child.

CONSISTENT APPROACH

How a consistent approach helps the child and the family feel secure and trusting.

- Building a strong teaching team with a key kaiako and a secondary kaiako knowing the children and families well.
- Communication between the team to better meet the needs of the child and the families.
- Respecting each other and knowing support is there when you need it.
- Creating an environment and a settling procedure that encourages and welcomes the presence and input of family and whanau.
- A consistent predictable environment with a key kaiako that knows the child well.
- Care moments that are slow, responsive and pleasurable to build trust, security and partnership between the child and the kaiako.

- A small group of infants per kaiako to ensure an intimate, responsive relationship built on knowledge and understanding of each other. A consistent communication platform for the families with texts, Educa posts and formal and informal conversations.

PEER RELATIONSHIPS

“Attachment is the prime factor in the development of social skills.

Providing a space that is developmentally appropriate, safe and stimulating for a group of infants and toddlers. An environment for a small group of infants and toddlers of a similar age and development level to foster relationships and encourage social interactions. “Enjoy exploring objects with another as the basis for establishing relationships”.

(Gonzalez Mena & Widmeyer Eyer, py252).

Kaiako respect the competence of toddlers in social interactions. We wait, observe and trust in the toddlers ability to problem solve during interactions with peers.

Kaiako implement strategies to help children feel supported in conflict or disagreements with peers. These can include:

- Close proximity to offer physical comfort,
- Selective intervention,
- ‘Time in’, and
- Mediation to support social competencies.

Children are supported in their attempts to communicate their wants and needs to others and emotional self regulation is fostered by ‘co-regulation’.



What is co-regulation & how can it help my child?

"Co-regulation" is the supportive process between adults and youth, children and young adults, which promotes self-regulation and the processing of emotions. The term first began to describe how caregivers support infants, but it evolved to describe the regulatory support that can occur across the lifespan. What co-regulation does is allow a child or young adult to observe, learn, and be coached by a caregiver to learn effective self-regulation techniques that they can use. It will enable the adult/caregiver to coach the child through difficult emotional situations.

Clare McMurty, <https://wilsonpediatric.com/blog>

Our approach to toileting is in line to that of sleeping and eating. As Kaiako we have responsibilities to provide children with the items required to eat, sleep, toilet, but we do not (and should not) force them to do these things.

The tamariki are in charge of these processes because, ultimately, we want them to tune into their bodies and take responsibility over their needs.

Whether transitioned to Tūi or settled in Kea, the younger cohorts are starting the journey of toilet learning. We call it this because toileting is a process of learning that happens all the way from infancy and nappy changes, it is not something we train them to do.

"Parents [and Kaiako] lay the groundwork for the child's readiness when, beginning at birth, we make diaper changes an enjoyable, cooperative time together, and respect the baby by slowing down and talking him through each part of the process." ~Janet Lansbury

We remain neutral and matter of fact when discussing bodily fluids as we want children to see this as a natural process that isn't something to be ashamed of. The downstairs space is designed to allow transitioning children to see their older peers and encourages them to

READINESS?

practice when they are ready. Often the flushing, toilet paper, and climbing on a stool spark the children's interest.

There are a few things that need to be in place too before any kind of successful and enjoyable learning can commence.

In the words of Magda Gerber-

Physically

- *capacity of the bladder to hold more fluid, better muscle control, ability to pull pants up and down (It is important for children who are learning to have pants that are easy to remove and put on, preferably with elastic waists and not zips, tied drawstrings or buttons)*

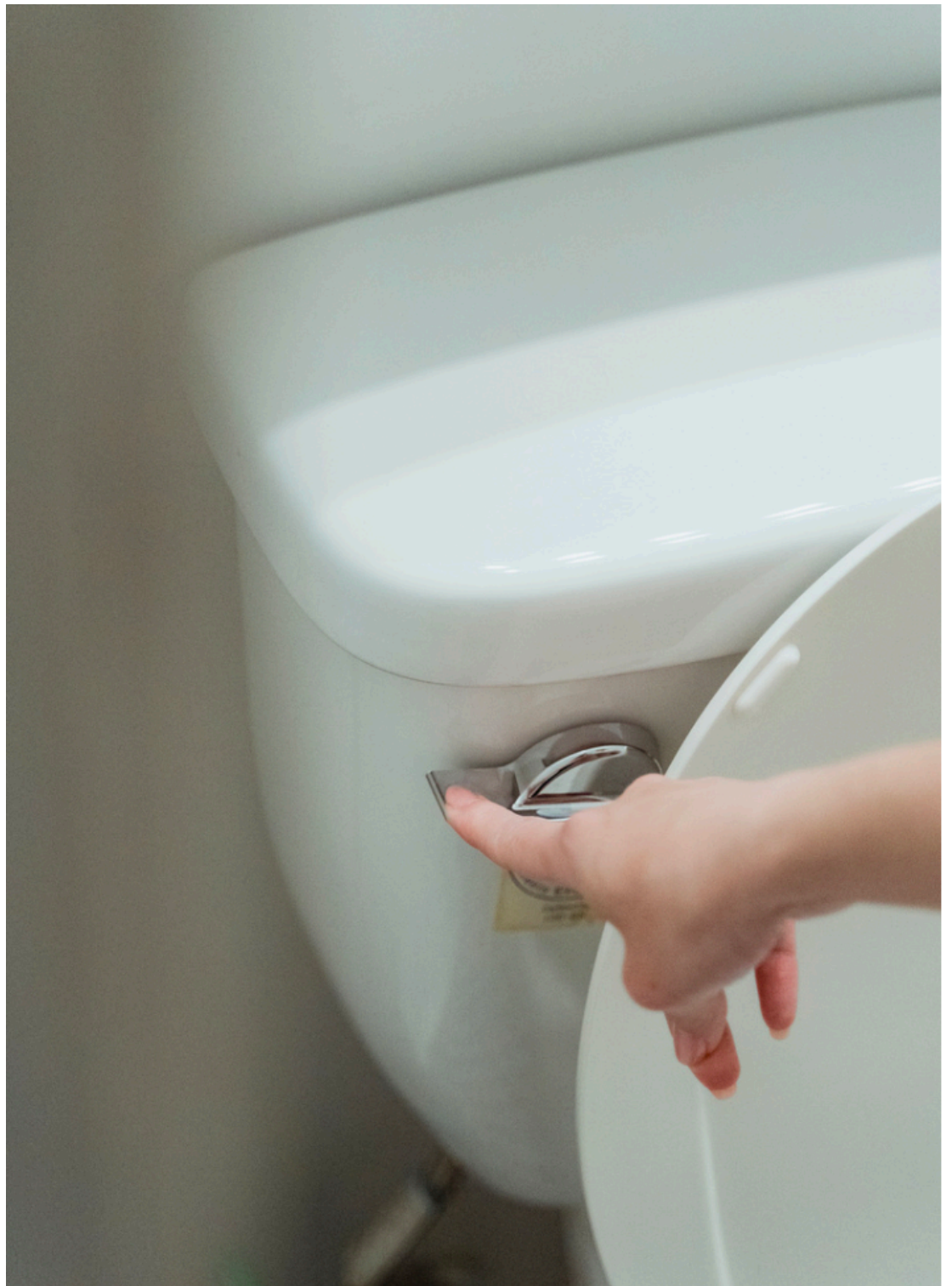
Cognitively

- *be fully aware of what he/she is expected to do, have an awareness of their bladder when busy and follow through with heading to the toilet. (This is a developmental stage and cannot be taught).*

And Emotionally

- *be ready and willing to give up a comfortable situation, such as just letting urine and faeces out whenever it does so naturally.*

*For the child, it means that he/she has to delay and control a natural urge, to give away something that he/she may believe is still part of his/her body, and therefore valuable, and to conform to an adult-designed and time routine. **It is an area and time of inner conflict.***



WHAT TO EXPECT AT TLC

With strong desire for autonomy, pressure to use the toilet can result in flat out refusal.

At TLC we always want to ensure that your children are changed frequently and we offer the toilet at each change with no agenda or pressure.

I might say, **"Would you like to use the toilet?"** to a child who is still wearing a nappy so they can decide and whatever choice they make I remain neutral. **"Not right now? Okay, maybe next time."**

Using the toilet is a part of a natural biological function - we all learned to do it eventually! - and it isn't something we should praise or reward- this can often unconsciously inform the child that not completing the task is a bad thing.

For the children now in underwear I will initially remind them (mainly before mealtimes) to check in with their bodies. E.g.

"I can see you're wiggling a little bit," or **"It's nearly lunchtime, let's go check in with your body."** The children then come and sit on the toilet, they can release their wees/poos or not and the mind-body connection grows!

NAPPIES

It is helpful if we have a relaxed approach to nappies and the use of them during toilet learning. Often families, and even the children, take an all-or-nothing approach and nappies become dreaded, but they can support children to feel secure if any turbulence is happening in their lives. During stress people often revert to the place where they felt most comfortable or safe. For newly toileting or sometimes established toileting, this can be wearing a nappy.

Many children will happily make wees on the toilet but poo's seem a bit more daunting and having a nappy as a back up is a great way to make children feel comfortable with the changes. They take more autonomy around caring for their bodies, recognising their emotional needs and practice dressing and undressing.

REGRESSION

Basically, this is a wonderful time of learning and can be stress free if we take the child's lead, let go of expectation and remain flexible to the inevitable changes/ accidents/ 'regressions' that happen.

"Returning to a former, less developed state is impossible for a neurotypical young child, in that, they literally can't go backwards and erase development. They can't unlearn what they have learned.

Children are developing emotionally at the same time that they're developing skills. But what happens is that children become easily overwhelmed with stress and emotion that makes it impossible for them to do things. And this is a temporary issue. It is not falling backwards. It's more like a pause, where they need our help or they need to do it differently." ~Janet Lansbury

FURTHER READING

For anyone unsure if their child is ready or not I encourage you to have a conversation/ email correspondence with your child's Kaiako. We are happy to support your whānau wishes along with ensuring we are providing developmentally appropriate support for your child.

<https://www.regardingbaby.org/2011/11/28/toilet-learning-made-easy/>

<https://www.janetlansbury.com/2020/06/its-not-regression/>

Ko tēnei te whakatipuranga o te tamaiti i roto i tōna oranga nui, i runga hoki i tōna mana motuhake, mana atuātanga.

~ Te Whāriki



The health and wellbeing of the child are protected and nurtured.

~ Te Whāriki

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

BY MORGAN



During my first week, I had times that were stressful with the staffing changes, but seeing how resilient and great the children have been through these changes has been amazing and the support from the team and families has been unwavering and beautiful, this has made a huge impact on my impressions and first few weeks at TLC.

I have learnt so much since joining the team, particularly with the RIE® philosophy and the emphasis on slowing down and being fully present in the moment.

Having interactions with the Kea children and taking the time to observe, listen and connect on a deep level has been huge in building their trust and being able to form the foundation of healthy relationships.

My first impressions of TLC have been overwhelmingly positive. It has challenged me to reflect on my assumptions about ECE and has inspired me to approach my work with renewed passion and purpose.

I have loved getting to know the philosophy, children, parents and whānau alongside my colleagues and I can't wait to continue my journey as a teacher and parent at TLC.

After nearly 12 months of being at home with my pepe, the thought of starting a new job was scary. I felt like I was embarking on a voyage into the unknown.

As I opened the gates to walk down to the Kea space and was greeted with warmth and enthusiasm by the amazing Sanna. The overall welcoming atmosphere instantly put me at ease.

From the moment I stepped into the centre it was evident that the principles of RIE® permeated every aspect of the environment. The room was thoughtfully set up to encourage exploration, with open-ended resources, there was a sense of calm as the children moved freely and confidently, supported by Sanna who responded to their cues with respect. This is something I haven't experienced before and it was so refreshing to observe.

The team have all had moments with me where they have shared their thoughts and expertise generously as I navigate the RIE® philosophy. I am excited to delve into this deeper throughout my teaching journey.



TE REO JOURNEY

**Ko Te Moana nui a Kiwa tōku moana
Nō Aerana, rātou nō Ingarani, nō Kōtirana, nō
Hāmoa hoki ōku Tūpuna
Ko Janine tōku māmā, Ko Paul tōku pāpā
Kei Waitākere ahau e noho ana
He Kaiako au
Ko Mikayla tāku ingoa**

My whānau shares a connection with the Pacific Ocean.
My ancestors come from predominantly Ireland, England,
Scotland and Samoa.

As many of you know Janine is my mum and I live in
Waitākere.

I am a teacher and my name is Mikayla.

This year I will be embarking on a bilingual te reo Māori
course to grow my knowledge to further share with the TLC
community.

**Whaowhia te kete mātauranga ~ Fill the
basket of knowledge (Whakataukī)**

Te ao Māori has a special place in my heart and I have always
felt called to it. I believe that is because of my Samoan
tūpuna and the fact that I share te moana nui a kiwa.

I joined kapahaka all through high school and performed at
Polyfest multiple times. Every experience gave me a deep
respect for te reo Māori and I know as kaiako we can do the
same for the tamariki at TLC.

Last year I suggested a form of micro emersion where
certain words get swapped out for Māori.

Kai - food

Wai - water

Tēpu - table

Pōtae -hat

Wharepaku - bathroom

Kope -nappy

Tarau - pants

Tīhāte -t-shirt

Pukapuka - book

I think you would all be surprised how much your children
know!

Every child at TLC knows our Kai Karakia ~

Just for fun before dinner tonight say, **“Kia Karakia tatou,”**
and see what happens.

I recommend downloading Te Aka (Māori dictionary) and
learning kupu when you can. It offers both a visual and verbal
demonstration which is very helpful for learning.

Another phrase I use often is, **“Kia tika te noho.”** (use it
when your tamaiti needs to sit properly on their chair.)

Kuwi & friends Māori picture dictionary is a lovely and
engaging resource you can use with your tamariki at bedtime.

We often look through it for Kotahitanga and it's incredible
to see how much joy it brings our older children.

I can still remember speaking te reo to my cohort when they
were young toddlers and watching their eyes light up in
fascination as they recognised what I was saying.

**He pai ake te iti i te kore ~A little is better
than none.**

With the change in 'policies' and Government 'ideals' around
te ao māori and the expectations to uphold Te Tiriti o
Waitangi, I thought it would be the right time to share how
much value we place on Te reo as a precious taonga (gift) for
your tamaiti.

Not only is it the bare minimum that we as Kaiako speak Reo
Māori to your tamariki, honour te Tiriti and tikanga but it is a
privilege to do so.

**“Te Tiriti has implications for our education system,
particularly in terms of achieving equitable outcomes for
Māori and ensuring that te reo Māori not only survives but
thrives. Early childhood education has a crucial role to play
here, by providing mokopuna with culturally responsive
environments that support their learning and by ensuring
that they are provided with equitable
opportunities to learn.” (Te Whāriki, 2017. p.3)**

I am not tangata whenua, but I am tangata tiriti as many of
you are.

Despite my whakapapa coming from elsewhere, I am lucky
enough to call Aotearoa my home.

The best goal we can hope for as teachers is for our tamariki
to leave TLC with a love for te ao māori but also a belief that
te reo māori and tikanga are a part of living in this beautiful
country.

It's normal.

It's Maori.

Māori

I. (modifier) normal, usual, natural, common, ordinary.

Te Whāriki

<https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Early-Childhood/ELS-Te-Whariki-Early-Childhood-Curriculum-ENG-Web.pdf>

Whakataukī <https://www.massey.ac.nz/student-life/m%C4%81ori-at-massey/te-reo-m%C4%81ori-and-tikanga-resources/te-reo-m%C4%81ori-pronunciation-and-translations/whakatauk%C4%AB-m%C4%81ori-proverbs/>

Kuwi and Friends Picture Dictionary

<https://www.whitcoulls.co.nz/kuwi-and-friends-maori-picture-dictionary-6499738>

By Mikayla

GARDENS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

When we first opened TLC, 17 years ago in April 2007, one of the licensing criteria we needed to meet was Health & Safety Criteria 12 Hazard & Risk Management, where we are directed to Manaaki Whenua's (Landcare Research) document 'Safety In Pre-School Centres' which lists "Plants which existing literature suggests should not be grown or tolerated in pre-school centres". Unfortunately, this is a purely text based list, with no images to help Kaiako identify these plants. So, about 10 years ago, I created a visual list to try to help Kaiako to identify these plants.

Since I first created TLC's poisonous plants list, based upon the Manaaki Whenua list, the list has been shortened, removing very rare plants (Deadly Nightshade), and some very common plants, because they "have no parts likely to attract young children; e.g. hellebores ... boxAnd thorn apple or datura". Today's much shorter list forbidden for ECE Centre's:

Internal Poisons - Harmful if swallowed

- Angel's Trumpet
- Arums and arum lily
- Bittersweet
- Castor oil
- Death cap and fly agaric fungi
- Fox glove
- Hemlock
- Jerusalem cherry
- Laburnum
- Lantana
- Lily of the valley
- Monkshood
- Oleander
- Persian lilac or white cedar
- Potato
- Privet species
- Queen of the night
- Spindle tree and Japanese spindle tree
- Stinking iris
- Tutu
- Yew

External Poisons - Harmful if touched

- Stinging nettles
- Wax tree or Japanese wax tree

The original list I based TLC's poisonous plants identification booklet on had 79 plants listed. **This** list of 23 is MUCH shorter. I am not sure how I feel about this, especially, as Manaaki Whenua now has another document called "[**Plants In New Zealand Poisonous To Children**](#)" which has 87 plants listed.

On the one hand, we could, without breaching licensing guidelines, now grow daffodils (who honestly thinks that children will dig up the bulbs, the poisonous part, and eat them?). On the other hand, shouldn't we do everything we can to educate Kaiako to keep our tamariki safe from harm?

Do we use common sense, to include the plants on the second larger list, which we honestly think are likely to be ingested, or, which would be harmful if touched?

Could we now grow the lovely Kowhai tree, but ensure that Kaiako make sure children do not grind up and ingest the seeds in the seed pod (the poisonous part)?

Kōwhai (*Sophora microphylla* and *S. tetraptera*). The yellow seeds are very poisonous if eaten, but only if they are ground or crushed before swallowing. Otherwise, they pass through the digestive system and cause no harm.

I mean, how realistic *IS* that amount of effort?

Our erstwhile gardener at TLC, an ex-Kindergarten teacher, scoffs at my vigilance with regards to Black Nightshade ... "I, in all my years, never saw a child eat it".

On the other hand, Dianne *has* seen children pick and eat leaves of plants. Should we not do our best to ensure that plants which *could* do harm if eaten .. are not available to be eaten?

To be fair, I always research any new plants I buy for TLC, and even if they are not 'on the list' but I find that they can irritate if ingested etc, then I do not buy them. And, we could have plants previously on the list, if they were out of reach of children (e.g. Swan plants).

I guess, that this just means our choices in the natural environment have to be as conscious, and thoughtful, as with our internal environment.

BY MARIE

WELLBEING PROJECT

BY DIXIE

Kia ora koutou,

I have been a part of the TLC team for two months and feel incredibly grateful to have been given the opportunity to become a member of the TLC whānau.

I am currently finishing my undergraduate degree in psychology and had previously thought that I would pursue a path into a clinical psychology program. I knew from a young age that I wanted to enter a profession that was centred around people and their wellbeing, particularly in New Zealand, where our societal fabric bears the scars of colonisation, a culture that stigmatises mental illness, the effects of neoliberalism and capitalism, etc. Although a psychology degree alone by no means moves the needle toward healing our society or enhancing people's wellbeing, I believe it has the potential to equip one with tools to contribute positively to the wellbeing of others and to gain a deeper understanding of those who are struggling or languishing.

My interest in the field of wellbeing ties back to what attracted me to TLC. TLC embodies the belief that fostering respect and care from the earliest stages of life can profoundly impact society. It aligns with my desire to contribute to a world where everyone receives the respect and wellbeing they deserve. I firmly believe that every individual deserves an opportunity to be understood, regardless of their age, dispositions, behaviours, or actions. This includes those who are difficult, challenging, or have made mistakes—everyone deserves this fundamental right. This synergy between my educational pursuits and ideology and TLC's mission strengthens my resolve to play a role in nurturing and supporting our community's youngest members.



"It's well known that greater access to nature has a range of benefits, such as improved cognitive function, blood pressure, mental health, physical activity and sleep."

*BBC News "[These are the neighbourhoods in most urgent need of trees](#)"
By Erin Vivid Riley*

BOOK REVIEW

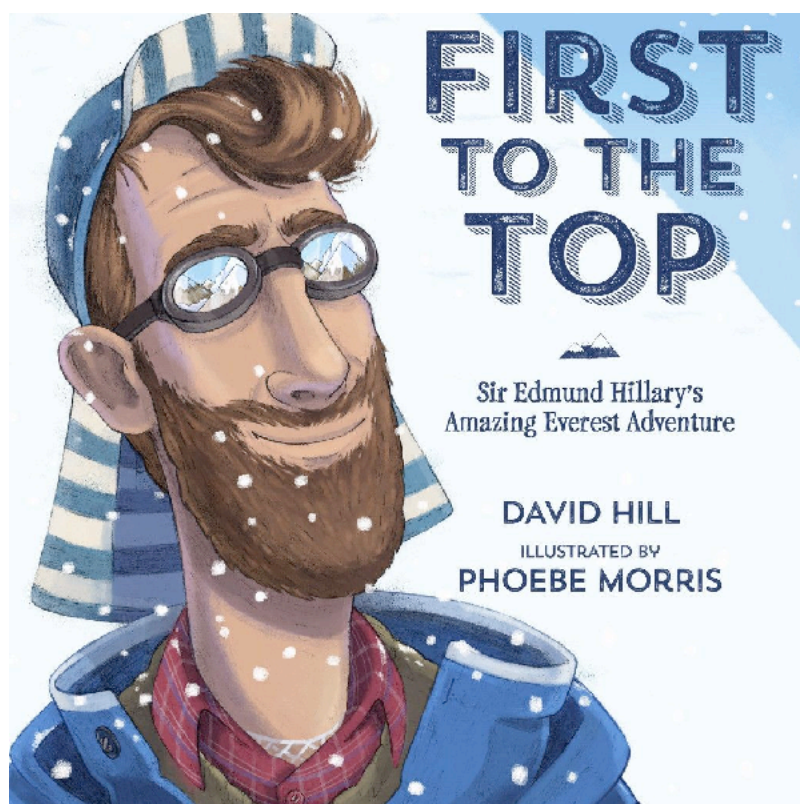
BY TOR
& LUCA



First to The Top

David Hill & Phoebe Morris

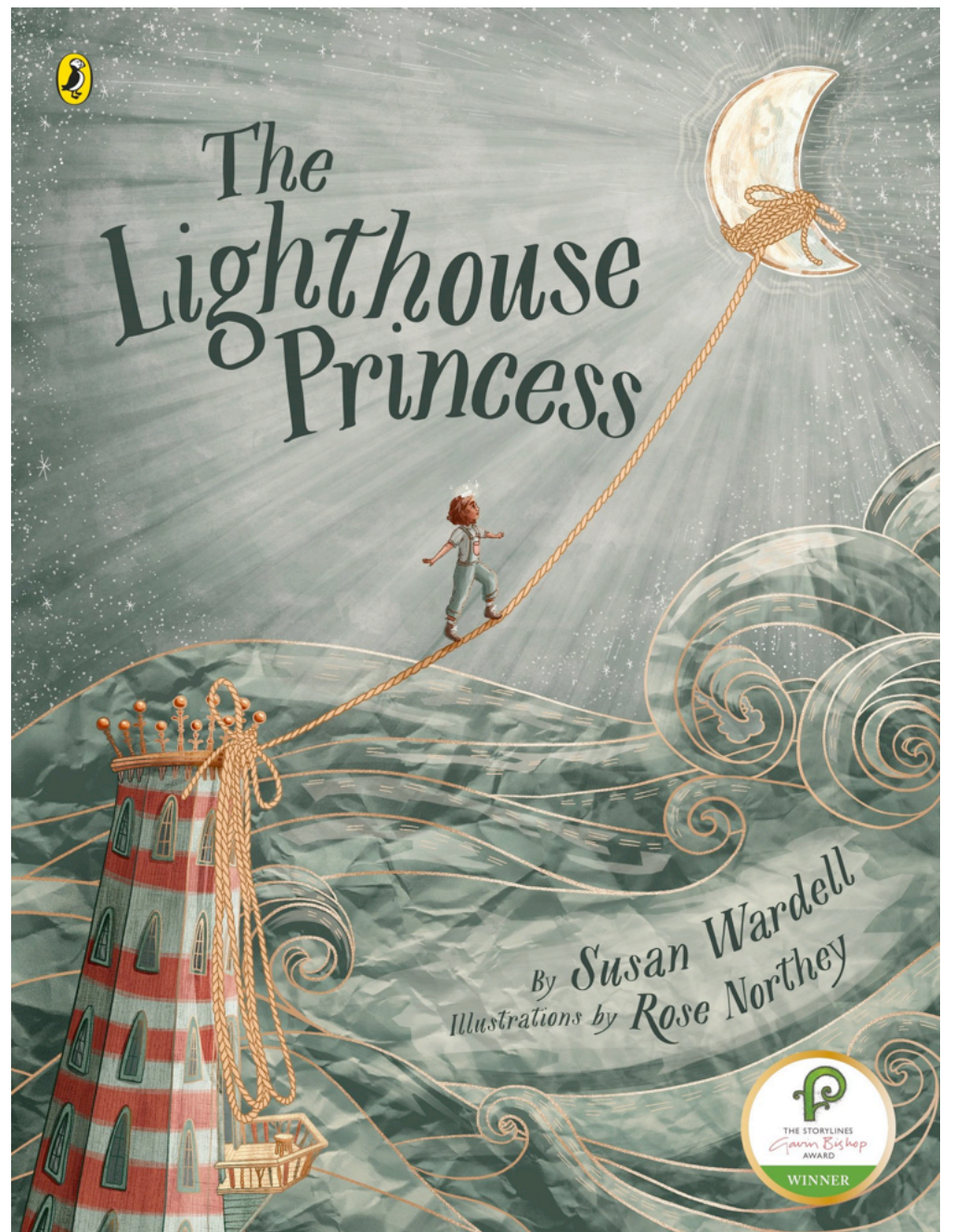
All about Sir Ed Hillary's life from being a small shy kiddo to one of the best mountaineers in the world. There is something about it, it's gentle and strong, normal-day-to-day and subtly absolutely inspiring all in one. You close it and think "why couldn't I summit an enormous peak today?" ... Or as Luca said to me out of the blue after we read this on repeat for a few weeks (when coming out of my closet nudie with a necklace on): "Dangerous but possible. Dangerous but possible."



The Lighthouse Princess

By Susan Wardell & Rose Northey

A very cool story about a princess who is totally capable and awesome and doesn't need for anything, but also loves it when a new pal enters her world. And with the most glorious illustrations. Who doesn't want to live in a lighthouse and look after the moon? (Also famous for me now as we finished reading this on repeat last night, Luca said "Next week, we dive." A life at sea for us, it seems.)



I LOVE the reading, and I love it when you see the stories weaving their way into daily life and seeing Luca's brain and imagination sparkling with them all!



TLC CALENDAR



TLC DATES

MAY

PARENT EVENING

Q&A Session
Two Sessions Upstairs and
Downstairs

JUL

PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS

TLC CLOSEDOWN

We endeavour to give whānau as much notice as possible of potential closedown dates. Current thinking is as follows. If you have feedback about this, please do let stepanie@thelearningcentre.co.nz know.

25

WEDS 25TH DECEMBER

Normal hours Christmas Eve.
Tuesday 24th December

TLC does not charge for the days in the closedown, including public holidays.

06

MON 6TH JANUARY

TLC reopens with
normal hours on
Monday the 6th of
January 2025

Normal invoicing will resume one Monday the 6th of January.

UPCOMING SOCIAL

MAY

MOTHER'S DAY?

Email
sanna@thelearningcentre.co.nz

JUN

MATARIKI DATE TBC

We will provide hotdogs and a
fire pit as usual.

JUN

NEXT PVC MEETING

If you wish to join the next PVC
meeting you would be very welcome.
Please let either
sanna@thelearningcentre.co.nz, or
Stephanie @thelearningcentre.co.nz
know.

