

Winter 2020
ISSUE 5

TLCZINE

A LITTLE SOMETHING FROM

EVERYONE

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1st WEEK OF
AUGUST

Online parent evening on Setting Boundaries

Magda Gerber

“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.”

EDITORIAL BY MARIE

Save Us From Interesting Times

2020 has been an ‘interesting’ year. Some of the articles in this newsletter were written way back before the first lockdown. We then decided to use the lockdown for everyone to have a chance to write a newsletter article. And then after we re-opened we were just too too busy to get it over the line with proofing and pulling it all together. Well, a silver lining for the Covid-19 resurgence, is that we have had that little bit of time, to finally get this newsletter out the door. I hope you enjoy it, and, as always, we welcome all feedback and comments.

If there is a photo of you or your child included, please let us know if you do NOT want that photo included when the newsletter is published to our website.

We have a number of exciting projects in the pipeline, one of these is the launch of a **TLC@Home** Service which will provide in-home Education. Our goal is that the teacher’s who work for this service, will be RIE® Foundations Trained, or will have completed the RIE® Nurturing Nanny® course.

We are also working with Elena, now that she is a RIE® Associate, and Ania, to provide **TLC Consulting** Services, that will include, one-to-one consulting/advice for parents, Parent Infant Classes, Before Baby Classes amongst others. A passion for Elena, is providing education for educators so, she will also be offering professional development for educators as well.

Because of the Covid-19 resurgence, we will be aiming to provide our planned **parent evening**

online now (Tuesday 8th September 7:30-9:00pm), our hope is that we will be able to record this, for future access of new parents, or those who could not attend on the day.

Politics and Early Childhood Education. Normally, prior to an election, I would prepare an editorial which laid out the policies of all the major parties, towards Early Childhood Education. However, prior to the last election, while the policies might be been consistently positive for ECE from all the coalition parties, nothing materially changed, until July 2020, when we suddenly got a funding increase outside of budget, and we will be getting the extra funding for 100% registered teachers next Jan (half the levels we had previously, but it still helps). But, to be fair, the policy that has helped TLC the most this year, was the wage subsidy. This allowed us to retain all our staff during our closedown, and pay them as well as NOT charging parents when we were closed. We are still waiting for the other boot to drop with the economy, and all our financial decisions are therefore cautious. So, I did not do a summary of political party’s policies this year, as a) what they say they will do, and what they actually do, can be soooo different, and b) how relevant is this in a Covid-19 World? What do you think?

Our community, as always, has been amazing, and supportive, and all of us at TLC are very grateful for this. Here’s wishing you boring times for the rest of 2020.

Written by . Marie

A Request



One aspect of making the most of lockdown for us a team, has been doing a review of meal times as a whole centre. We value mealtimes as an important time for connection. How this looks, for an infant, toddler, a young child changes over time, but the premise is always the same – this is a refuelling time to slow down, be with the teacher, and as children get older, to be with their peers.

This time together is part of what enables the time apart, when the children move away and find their own activities to do, either with others or alone. We all know the research on the importance of play. This is the learning how to learn.

Because we value the importance of uninterrupted play, we also see the meal times as crucial for creating a sense of rhythm and flow for the children, a little bit of necessary structure (we all need to eat) to create a sense of time.

But the meal is so much more than just about meeting a basic physical need and creating a rhythm. These are rich learning moments, when we asked the teachers what learning was happening, these were some of the responses:

- The children are welcomed to help the teacher preparing for mealtimes, wiping the tables and

getting things ready; and help cleaning up after the meal. (Belonging, Contribution)

- For the kea children, we have higher expectations for them regarding self-help skills and contributing to the team. For example, pouring water from water jugs by themselves, starting to serve themselves food, putting dishes away, cleaning their faces and hands(Wellbeing)
- Having conversations at mealtimes helps children's language skills and social emotional skills – share their own feelings and thoughts and listening to others'; waiting quietly if another child is talking.
- Consistency and predictability allows them to learn when and how they can participate. Waiting for them to ask for more or tarry time when asking if they would like more of something empowers and allows them to be attuned to their bodies, make their own decisions, develop communication skills.
- Experiential language. Two way communication - learning to give and receive each other's cues. Physical skills role modelled by present teacher. Group experience allows self-awareness and awareness of others. Peer role- modelling - tuakana-teina. Learn each other's names through the experience of taking turns.

A Request Continued



- Through the meal times that we strive for at TLC, the children learn to trust that their needs will be met and that their teachers can recognize and respond to their cues as well as their skill levels and recognition of possible regression, potentially a form of communication of a current need.
- The children involved in our kai times also learn the value of expectations, limits and boundaries. They rely on us to stay true to these, and when consistent, we are able to add to their sense of security.
- The learning has been so inspiring and amazing to see. From the changes in the way the children manage the silver jug and pouring the water. The difference in their muscle control, cognitive understanding and hand eye coordination is wonderful to see. How they learn the expectations around mealtimes. It makes my heart swell with pride when I see the children sitting at the table with their bibs on, waiting for their peers to finish washing their hands. Or how the children can wait without pushing for a turn at the sink.
- Their skills with the spoons and their skills with the water glass is amazing and how competent they are in asking for more water or mash.
- So many skills are developed at the kai table, not just physically, but emotionally, socially and cognitively. This is why we should always value these moments and the learning that unfolds.
- Learning about respect for food
- Food vocabulary

- Shared time with others
- Sometimes just to appreciate some quiet time to enjoy food?

So this is where a request comes in on our part. We ask that all children arrive with enough time to settle in before morning tea. Ideally before 8:45am. It can be disruptive to the whole flow of a meal time when a child arrives part way through. We do understand that life happens sometimes, so if that does happen, we ask that you quietly wait with your child and allow the teacher to keep her focus on the group of children at her table. You could quietly join the meal time with your child. Or if it's an appointment you have or need a later start, if you can offer morning tea at home and arrive after the mealtime has finished this can also be helpful.

There is a flow to our day and we do see that it works better for the children if they can arrive to settle in for the day, have a play, have morning tea, it helps that feeling of being settled in. If children are doing a short day and they end up missing a lot of those meal times over time, we see it can have an effect on their feelings of being part of the group.

Please don't hesitate to have a chat with us if you have any questions or concerns in regards to this. Key teacher's can work with you to make a plan that works best for your child.

Written by Ania

EMOTIONAL ADVENTURE OR ADVENTURES OF EMOTIONS?

Miss 2 1/2 year old and I are in the Kea space, sitting amidst the rumpus, energy and explorations of toddlers at work. We are busy with a conversation of our own, when suddenly I notice a change of expression on her face. She raises her eyebrows, pupils dilated and pauses our conversation. I can see that she is focusing on something that has grabbed her attention. She quickly brings her index finger to her ear, looks at me and says, "What's that noise?" her gaze is fixed to the Tūr side. I look at her perplexed. Looking at my expression, she answers my thoughts, "Someone's crying," she says. "Oh! I hear it too," I reply, but even before I could finish, I was interrupted, "I think ABC is sad, I wonder what she needs," she said.

I have to admit, this wasn't the first time a toddler had shown such immense understanding of someone else's emotions. But the profoundness of this moment forced me into reflection. Firstly, we could not see who it was, but Miss 2 1/2 attuned to the environment, could filter out a distressed cry and recognising the cry, was able to identify the right person, (which was found out to be right, when I took a peep on the Tūr side) and this left me in awe of what just happened. How can such a (relatively) brand new human being, who is also new to the downstairs area, have such an advanced understanding of emotions!! Sometimes I can't even make sense of what's running through my head and this is after 33 years of human life experience on Earth. So what do I believe is different with these little ones?? I think they have been fortunate to be introduced to the RIE® ways of life.

When I decided to change my career from being a secondary/high school teacher to an early childhood teacher, my motivation was to learn about language development in the early years. "How does it all begin? How do babies learn language(s)?" But when I embarked on the RIE® and Pikler journey, this question extended to a broader spectrum of life. Suddenly, I had engrossed myself into the psychology and emotional development of both children and adults equally. I'm not sure when it all changed, but I guess it became a priority to me. I learnt that when one feels completely safe, one can confidently start stepping out to explore and achieve their goals in whatever they choose to do in their lives.

At some point it also became a bit personal, I began finding myself through these children. I began to question my internal dialogue, my ways of coping with life and challenges. Mr 2 once, while choosing a puzzle, said to me, "Not that one, it's too hard for me, makes me frustrated." Instantly, I asked myself "Could I do that?", could I verbalise my frustrations and my feelings?? Also, when I watch some of them restart their work from scratch, almost in a pensive and meditative way, without displaying even the slightest irritation. I wonder "Do I have the patience to start all over again? and if I don't, then, why not? How do I feel

about it?". All my questions had only one answer: Having the knowledge and understanding of your own internal feelings and emotions. Once you have that, you will learn how to control your emotions and self regulate.

OUR FEELINGS ARE OUR MOST GENUINE PATHS
TO KNOWLEDGE.

-Andre Lorde

So, how does it begin? The question is, 'why' do we do, what we do? This is my reflection, not preaching a right or wrong answer.

When children are exploring everything around them, this is a rich opportunity for both educators and parents, to support their learning journey. Acceptance is the key to this wisdom. Accepting emotions as a part of life and knowing that emotions are healthy, can create wonders for everyone. When working with children it is very important to accept that children have feelings too.

SADNESS, DISCOMFORT, FRUSTRATION-THEY ARE
ALL VALID HUMAN EMOTIONS. WHY WOULD WE
WANT TO SUPPRESS THEM?

- Magda Gerber

Initially children need a bit of help naming these explosions in their body and mind. That is where we play our part by acknowledging those feelings, empathising and offering support. This helps children recognise what they are feeling and they learn to talk about what is happening for them. Sometimes they can't and that is okay too. During such times all they want to do is vent and release it all completely. When this happens, we have to support them as a witness, without adding our emotions, only sportscasting and being present in the moment.

UNDERPLAYING SITUATIONS IS BETTER THAN
OVERPLAYING THEM. THE MORE YOU MAKE A
BIG DEAL OF IT, THE LESS CHILDREN LISTEN.
THE MORE YOU LET CHILDREN FIGURE THINGS
OUT WITH GUIDANCE, THE MORE CAPABLE
THEY BECOME.

-Magda Gerber

EMOTIONAL ADVENTURE OR ADVENTURES OF EMOTIONS? - CONTINUED

I believe this gives them time to calm down and figure things out on their own. It also provides us with a great test of patience and tolerance, ha! A great lesson I learnt while approaching emotions in this manner, was the art of being/ staying neutral. At first, I thought, HOW EXACTLY am I supposed to do that? A child is screaming and hurt when you receive a whack on your face out of excitement or testing. I have to confess, there have been times when two seconds have seemed like five minutes and my natural instinct has been to fix things. But I have learnt from children what they are capable of. Most importantly, I have learnt to begin again. I have learned not to take the children's emotions personally and everyday I have been working to stay "unruffled" (Janet Lansbury), and to improve my skills in supporting and understanding emotions better. I even went for a meditation retreat!!

This journey of emotions has been very cathartic for someone like me who is normally very stoic. I now feel comfortable sharing my feelings; even as basic as "I am feeling tired today." To which I was given lovely advice by Mr. nearly two years old, "Neeti, go home, have dinner and shower and you feel okay." I had a chuckle at that point. But isn't that what we often suggest to the children? When we share our feelings, we role model that it is okay to unload our mind and we are not alone in this. We also facilitate a better understanding of emotions to the children - the whys, whats and hows via our explanation and reasoning. Whats and hows, via our explanation and reasoning.

WHAT PARENTS TEACH IS THEMSELVES, AS MODELS OF WHAT IS HUMAN - BY THEIR MOODS, THEIR REACTIONS, THEIR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND ACTIONS. THESE ARE THE REAL THINGS PARENTS NEED TO BE AWARE OF, AND OF HOW THEY AFFECT THEIR CHILDREN. ALLOW THEM TO KNOW YOU, AND IT MIGHT BECOME EASIER FOR THEM TO LEARN ABOUT THEMSELVES.

- Magda Gerber

Children learn about themselves through the relationships they have with us. This is then taken in to the world. You start seeing a comforting pat, or a reminder that someone is sad, or an epidemic of giggles and laughter that takes down everyone around. During my conversation with Janine before writing this article she said to me "That's the moment when you realise that you helped the child gain an understanding of how emotions affect others and now they are using that knowledge in their interactions with peers. It's very precious and brings you immense joy when you see them applying and repeating things that you have been saying to them." I couldn't agree more and reflect on the fact that it all begins with emotional understanding, individual readiness, cognitive development and responsive relationships. Then slowly the magic unfolds.

In conclusion, I can now answer a question I asked myself in the past. A few years ago, back home, the Secondary school, where I was teaching, started peace project as a subject. I had my scepticism then. Dubiously I thought is it even possible to create that amount of emotional literacy amongst children, who understand their own and others feelings and emotions?? YES, it is.

PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE LONG KNOWN THAT IN THESE FORMATIVE FIRST YEARS (WHILE OUR BRAINS TRIPLE IN SIZE) THE INTERACTIONS WE HAVE WITH OUR LOVED ONES, ESPECIALLY THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR EMOTIONS ARE RECEIVED AND RESPONDED TO, ARE INTERNALIZED AS "SELF". MEANING, HOW WE ARE TREATED IS WHO WE BECOME, AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS KNOW THIS DEEP SENSE OF SELF IS DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO SHAKE LATER ON.

- Janet Lansbury



Written by Neeti

NAPPY CHANGING

A MOMENT TO SHARE



Since I first wrote about the importance of Partnership as one of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, it became a way of being... I suddenly saw the importance of partnership in everything I did. In terms of early childhood education, this concept of partnership was essential between kaiako, tamariki and whānau. Quickly, this became an integral part of my personal teaching philosophy and as I continued my journey as a teacher and became more aware of the RIE philosophy, the significance of partnership only became more apparent.

An area of which the idea of partnership really resonated with me was with nappy changing. Nappy changes are a beautiful opportunity for respectful, reciprocal partnership to take place. It's a moment to share with our children. I cherish the quality time that comes with each nappy change and the learning for both myself and the child along the way. Through slow, reciprocal interactions, attunement and sensitive observation, we are able to gain a better understanding of the child's stage of development and whether they are ready to participate in different ways. For example the child might show us that they are interested in holding the nappy and take joy in the responsibility of handing it over once we are ready to put it on. Eventually the child may be showing an interest in their body and how to take care of it by having a turn wiping for themselves. Some children love to be involved in ways such as these and others do not, both are okay.

"Diapering is very important. Diapering is sometimes viewed as an unpleasant chore... a time separate from play and learning. But in the process of diapering we should remember that we are not only doing the cleaning, we are intimately together with the child. We are all affected, negatively or positively, by cumulative experiences in our lives. One of the first such cumulative experiences is diapering, involving much of the child's and parent's time and energy during those first, most impressionable two to

three years of the child's life. While being diapered, the baby is close to the parent and can see her face, feel her touch, hear her voice, observe her gestures, and learn to anticipate and know her" Magda Gerber

During the RIE foundations course, I sought advice about a child in my care who, since the moment he could confidently roll over onto his stomach, insisted on doing so for every nappy change. He was so eager to venture on his journey towards crawling and each day would wriggle and twist on the change table. He was never unhappy to be having his nappy changed, he simply had an urge to move.

I couldn't understand how to make this more enjoyable for him... all of the other children in my care loved the feeling of connection that came with each nappy change. It then dawned upon me that this child didn't dislike nappy changes, but his urge to move was bigger than his need for this quality time with me. I was so focused on trying to make this a beautiful nappy change, that I couldn't see that this is what is happening for him now. It was wonderful to realise this and I felt secure knowing that we have many other beautiful moments of quality time together throughout the day. The time we spent together in those moments was enough, I accepted this.

It was a big learning moment for me, I was reminded that children are constantly growing and evolving, requiring us, as kaiako to be attuned to their needs as they do so and adjust our expectations accordingly.

This child has since developed the ability to crawl and stand himself up holding the rail of the nappy change table. Even though he still likes to coast along the change table, we have wonderful changes together and he is now showing an interest in participating by anticipating my actions, for example, which leg to lift first.

“Attunement sounds simple. Yet so often we can become transfixed by our own internal notions of what should be rather than remaining open to what is. In other words, our own preoccupations can limit how we truly take in another.” Dr. Dan Siegel

The invitation is the first step towards a respectful nappy change. With the young children in my care, I invite them by saying **“haere mai ki te wharepaku** - come to the bathroom”. For children who are still deciphering language and making sense of sounds and the formation of words, this is a wonderful opportunity to help them to understand that this string of words always leads to a nappy change. If the child becomes busy and the nappy change is not urgent, I might let them know that I'm wanting to change their nappy, but can see that they're engaged in a task, so I will change them once they have moved away. If the nappy change is not urgent, but they are not busy, I might ask if they are ready for a nappy change now. I am conscious that because I am asking this as a question, they may communicate that they are not ready and I must respect this.

Communication is a key factor in a respectful nappy change. When partnered with consistency, the child is able to make connections between sounds/words and touch/actions and will eventually be able to anticipate our actions and make better sense of them. So often, nappy changes are associated with a negative connotation and words that reiterate that, such as, "dirty" or "smelly". At TLC, our words and actions hold no such stigma. Rather than saying "you have a dirty nappy" I might say "you've done poos". Whilst verbal communication varies with each child, we must remember that non-verbal communication is a very real form of communicating also, particularly with infants and toddlers. Which is why it is important to remember to communicate with our whole bodies. Whilst a toddler might recognise the word "nappy" and it's association with the actions to follow, an infant is still relying on our non-verbal communication to make sense of what is happening. In which case, I might meet the infant with clear eye-contact and gentle, offering hands, as I say, "I'd like to check your nappy", the child might respond by reaching their hands up or simply holding my eye contact and moving their body forward, letting me know that they are ready.

The same goes for what follows the invitation... some children whom are developmentally ready, might take pride in the progression of climbing the steps, in which case I say "I need to pull the steps out before you climb them" and continue to do so. To others, I might say "I'm going to lay you on the table" I touch their bottom to the table and then their head, ensuring the child has a clear view of me so not to strain their necks during the nappy change. I continue to communicate what happens next and invite their participation while always waiting for a response before proceeding.

“Explain and show your infant what you are doing, step by step. Allow your infant to follow and become involved in the process, to make eye contact, study your face, vocalize, initiate play, follow your actions and respond to you, and you to him.” Magda Gerber

For me, **the perfect nappy change is made up of five key ingredients; partnership, respect, consistency, communication and attunement.**

As we demonstrate these qualities to our children, we are providing them with a positive sense of self-worth as well as showing them how to treat the people around them, and whilst not every nappy change is 'perfect', we can certainly do our best to strive for a respectful, reciprocal experience.

Written by Sam



FROM BABIES TO TODDLERS

"CONTINUITY GIVES US ROOTS; CHANGE GIVES US BRANCHES, LETTING US STRETCH AND GROW AND REACH NEW HEIGHTS."

- PAULINE R KEZER

BY ALEX

Up until the day two children and I transitioned up into the Weka space, I had spent very little time working with toddlers. During the two years I spent at my previous centre, I was exclusively caring for infants, saying goodbye around the 18 month mark when they moved to the next room.

I was elated when I found out it was time to transition into the Weka space. I knew without a doubt that the children I was taking with me would thrive in the new environment and seeing the same experience for myself. "I know these children" I thought, "I was their secondary caregiver in the Kākano space not so long ago". I was extremely confident that I knew the children who were coming with me and the best way to care for and support them.

I'm sure any of you who have experienced this transition from infancy to toddlerhood, as a parent or caregiver, know exactly the shock I was in for. Sure, these are the same children I met on my first day at TLC, but those brains in their heads and feet in their shoes have been doing an awful lot of growing.

I couldn't believe just how much my young friends had changed. Of course I knew all the theory, all the neuroscience around the way the brain's development influences the behaviour. What I wasn't prepared for was the countless intricacies of this.

The child who eats anything and everything suddenly does not want to touch their mash. The lover of nappy changes is "too busy" to have one and the young adventurer wants to stay by my side.

Suddenly all my old tried and true strategies were simply not doing the trick. Now it was time to consult my remarkable team of co-workers and the big pile of books on my shelf to develop some new ones.

These books and people reminded me of what I already know - with a whole lot of growth comes a whole lot of change. My young friends are growing at a rate that will be unmatched at any future part of their lives. Why on earth would they stay the same? I'm certainly not the same person I was as a teenager. Mushrooms went from my 'must avoid' list, to my top 5 foods of all time and steak did the opposite. I run in different circles, I have different hobbies, interests, and goals. Why did I not expect the same for the children?

This new frame of mind made all the difference. There was no more thinking "but Toby loves washing his hands at the tap" because clearly my young friend's priorities have changed and he now strongly values completing a task before moving away. There's no need to think "why doesn't Grace want to eat some mash before insisting I serve her solids?" because Grace has asked Helen what's for lunch today, so she knows there is spaghetti coming up and boy does she love spaghetti.

These children are remarkable, and thoughtful, and resilient, and capable of things I could never even imagine prior to seeing it. I am so grateful to work at a centre where I get to experience this transition from infancy to toddlerhood first-hand. Without the opportunity to practice continuity of care I don't think I would have had the opportunity to clearly see all of these remarkable changes take place within the children I know so well.

My transition down to the Kea space is drawing near and I am pleased to say that this time around, I am prepared to be unprepared.



THE JOYS OF CREATIVE FREEDOM

BY ALEX



During RIE® Foundations in January, one of the pieces of homework we were given was to write about a play object or a place that was significant to our childhood. When we were given this assignment these photos you see on the left immediately came to mind. In the photos I am out on the front deck of my childhood home (I lived there from birth to age 18), completely naked, and painting on my big wooden easel

Although I don't have specific memories of doing this, I feel like the joy and fulfilment I experience when looking at these photos reflects how that activity made me feel.

Two aspects of my childhood that I remember very clearly are the love I had for exploring art in all its forms and how much I adored being out on that front deck. Playing with my friends or with my little brother Liam, sitting on the edge watching people pass by, and holding countless birthday parties and family gatherings. That space was like a magical middle-ground between our home and the rest of the world.

The freedom I so clearly felt in this moment is something I truly love to see in the children and their own play. Nobody stopped me to send me off to get dressed, or told me to paint anything in particular; I was simply allowed to be and express myself in my own unique way. My hope is that I can facilitate this same blissful freedom in the tamariki of TLC.

My Mum's response to this article: "Oh I love that! That deck was your happy place I think, when you were a little baby we had a hammock on it and I used to lay you in the hammock and rock you. You loved it and would sleep for ages or just talk to yourself. After the first time that you painted naked it just became part of the painting experience that you automatically took off all your clothes when we got the paints out. I just loved that it was such freedom of expression. So glad you shared this and that it's such a happy memory xxx"

STAIRS



Dear Skylar,

It has been for a while, that you have been working on getting down on these stairs from the Weka room. Every time you saw the Weka space available for you and the rest of the Kākano children, you would make your way to enter the Weka room straight away and start your play there with others. It is such a treat for all the Kākano children to have the opportunity to explore in that room, where all the challenge and excitement is fulfilled. Many times, I noticed that you would stop over on top of the stairs. In the earlier days, you would call out to let us know that you need help to get down, but after some time, you gradually developed the ideas of waiting and knowing that from us, you are encouraged to try to get down on your own as much as possible. After leaving you plenty of time and space to work on that, only if it is time for a care moment, I would offer you a cuddle and pick you up.

Just the other day, it was almost our lunch time, I was quite close to the stairs that you were trying to get down, and by the time I had put the other children's food away and had come back, you had started to make your own way down. I am so glad that I had a camera ready and captured these steps, you made and achieved the goal you had been working on for the last few weeks. Your movements were so steady and smooth. As soon as you reached to the bottom part of the stairs, you decided to go back up again and practice getting down. I know that practicing is an important strategy and you would always be so keen to revisit your experience. I am so grateful that you have mastered this and there is nothing else that would stop you from being an active and curious explorer from now on.

When you were standing on top of those stairs before, you seemed to be making your own decision whether it was safe to get down or not, and doing a lot of thinking **“am I comfortable enough to make the move or not? What and where to begin, and how to get the all the way down safely?”** Spending the time processing your thoughts, and then making your decision to turn your body, and go back to the room and carry on your play in the Weka room until that day, after all the risk assessment, thinking how to get down and building on your strategies, you finally made your move. I know you can do it as you are always a confident self-learner and would like to challenge yourself physically quite often, and this part of your learning journey reflects your great sense of safety and skills on making decisions, risk taking/assessment and problem solving. Of course, it also showed us how settled and comfortable you are in this environment – the entire upstairs space.

Skylar, we know that when you take on a challenge, it takes time, effort and willingness to explore possibilities. From the RIE® principles and our curriculum Te Whāriki, it is well explained that what the child is learning, is actually doing, and having plenty of time for uninterrupted play that these are the opportunities we provide for her/him to become a confident learner. I will continue to observe your play and I am intrigued to find out more about you, your interests and what new challenges you will be working on next.

“One’s identity as a competent learner and knower is to some extent built around the notion of making progress, getting better at something, becoming more expert and knowing more.” Margaret Carr 2008

Written by Vera

RELATIONSHIPS

THE HEART
OF OUR
PHILOSOPHY
IS
RELATIONSHIPS



This is 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).

The benefits of attachment:

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

Relationships - Ngā hononga

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

So when you think about relationships in the early childhood centre, 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 referred to as the child's primary caregiver and we are in 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:

KAIAKO & CHILD

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."

RELATIONSHIPS - CONTINUED

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 & FAMILY

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 in sleep routines.

Infants and toddlers go through many changes over the first three years. Their developmental growth is huge and the 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

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

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 whānau.

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 daily cards, Educa posts and formal and informal conversations.

Peer relationships and the environment: **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.

RELATIONSHIPS - CONTINUED



Shared interests: negotiating, problem solving, imaginary and exploratory play. Learning alongside others



RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIVE, RECIPROCAL THE THREE R'S OF RELATIONSHIPS

"Relationships between caregivers and very young children don't just happen. They grow from a number of interactions".

(Gonzalez-Mena, Widmeyer Eyer, Infants, toddlers and caregivers)

"Enjoy exploring objects with another as the basis for establishing relationship".

(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 conflicts 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.



Visits from siblings. A sense of belonging, connecting with family and the wider world.

Celebrating birthdays can be a wonderful way to come together as a group and make those connections between home and centre. They involve the families, the peer group and celebrate a special moment in that child's life.

RELATIONSHIPS - CONTINUED



THE THREE R'S OF RELATIONSHIPS RESPECT

To treat even the youngest infant like a person not an object.

“Respect infants and toddlers as worthy people. Don't treat them as objects or cute little empty-headed people to be manipulated”. (Gonzalez-Mena, Widmeyer Eyer, Infants, toddlers and caregivers).

We talk to our infants and let them know what is going to happen to them. We let them know what we would like them to do or prepare them for a change/transitional moment.

“When an adult speaks quietly about what is happening and waits for a response, the child does not need to be on alert that a change could be coming at any moment unannounced.” (Ruth Anne Hammond, Respecting Babies)

We approach them from the front, we slow down, and we give them time to react.

We speak to them like people. We reflect their emotions, we use touch and eye contact to let them know we see them and hear them.

We value our care moments and take time to be fully present. Attunement. Filling up the child's emotional tank and meeting their physical needs, means that they can play, explore, socialise and learn about themselves and the world around them.

They are more likely able to self-regulate their emotions, be part of a group of peers and practice new skills in a focus and engaged way.

Respecting infants also means giving them time and space to learn in their own way. So creating an environment that is safe and allows them to move freely in the knowledge that loving care is close by when they need it.

THE THREE R'S OF RELATIONSHIPS RESPONSIVE

Listening to the child's needs, understanding their cues and meeting those needs in a way that lets the child feel safe and secure.

Using sensitive observation to get to know the child's ways of communicating and letting them understand ours.

Viewing each child as a unique individual and asking ourselves the question "I wonder?" instead of assuming we know what the child may feel or need because of our own agenda.

Being fully present in the moment of one on one care.



Building a partnership in the care and education of the child, inviting them to participate.

Active participants instead of passive recipients. "Babies learn cooperation as an added benefit of the nappy changing partnership" (infants, toddlers and caregivers)

Understanding the child's preference for a way of moving and respecting that and working together.

Relying on non judgemental observation to build understanding of the infant's needs and competencies- along with skilled, responsive caregiving - A RIE practitioner aims to create mutually, respectful, authentic, and cooperative relationships (Gerber, 2002).

To conclude this look at relationships, I believe that we all want to create an environment for our infants, toddlers and young children that reflects their authentic and unique selves. We want to celebrate how they grow and learn through play and being in a social world. We want them to grow to be the very best they can be. To be adults who are kind, confident, secure in their sense of self, but also empathetic and considerate of the world around them. We need to foster self belief, confidence and resilience in our children, to nurture their self worth and compassion. We do this alongside others. In loving, respectful, responsive relationships in which we listen, understand, empathise, rejoice and commiserate. We are a part of a whānau and community. We trust and feel a sense of belonging by knowing who we are and that we are valued and accepted by those who care for us. This is how we know we matter in this world. I think that is the greatest of all gifts.

Written by Janine

Discovering My Village

This time last year my husband had a heart attack. It was gentle enough not to kill him and strong enough to give him a good fright. It took me about 6 weeks to process that there could have been a very very different outcome. When it happened I was all bravado - telling everyone that Yes, He is Fine and No, I don't Need Help at Home. And at the time I meant every word of that. But now when I think about it, how different our lives might have been had it not just been a little wake-up call, I get teary and anxious and my system is awash with love for him and gratitude for the fact he is still here. He had never been sick before. I had never seen him stressed. The hospital room where he spent this week was a completely new experience for him. He learned that it was OK to do nothing for a week except focus on getting healthy, and I discovered who my village was.

My parents were prepared to drop everything and come straight to my home. One friend offered to drive three hours south to me to be with my children for the week. Two friends visited the husband in hospital and they came in dancing with offerings of toys, magazines, and an amazing selection of heart-strengthening food. My incredible boss picked up my daughter from her pre-school and took her home for the afternoon. Another friend picked up my other two children from school, fed them, bathed them, and had them ready for me for when I was finally able to come and pick them up. Another friend came over with her newspaper crosswords and sat in my home until 11pm so I could go to the hospital at night. Actually I got home at 9pm and we drank whisky until 11pm but it still counts. My neighbour came over that same night to sit with us and share the whiskey. I had texts and calls from all over the country checking in on us and offering love and support and advice. None of these gestures were things I would have thought about asking from any of them. But they all just showed up, got on with it and made my life that much richer for being part of it.

The whole experience made me reflect on the concept of community and connection. Friendship and love. How much we need each other particularly when there are children around. The care and empathy my children received from their teachers was

above and beyond their job descriptions but then there is no surprise there - they are teachers after all - they have elephant hearts and love to burn.

The day it happened I got a call from his producer about 25 minutes before I was heading into a much needed Pilates class. When I heard her say, "Yeah so we have taken him to the hospital," I literally rolled my eyes and sighed. I really wanted to go to Pilates.

I drove straight to the hospital where I found him clutching his chest and saying "I bet you rolled your eyes when you found out! Honey, from now on I will only drink water and lick kale! Even in his most challenging moment he knew I needed to be made to laugh. He knows me so well he correctly guessed my response.

Since that day he hasn't stopped kissing the children and I and will often stop to just gaze at them. He reads *The Hobbit* to the older ones every night for 30 minutes and tries to get home early from his demanding job so that he can make sure he has time to do it. He takes me on dates and buys me the good wine, the one on the second to top shelf and we hug a million times every day. We plan lovely things for the future and are highly possessive of our weekends. So while I still live with anxiety about the "what ifs", we are revelling in the here and now.

Written by Sanna



THE LUCKY COUNTRY



The night before the government-enforced Lock-Down in New Zealand to flatten the curve of COVID-19, our family and two others went to dinner at a friends' restaurant for one 'last hurrah'. We suspected the lock-down was coming and although nothing had been announced officially, our friends had already decided to keep their children home the previous week from the school which our children attend. We had chosen not to keep my children at home because I wanted to go to work, and felt very comfortable with our decision. I was berated by friends who were well-meaning, but couldn't understand my desire to continue to work (and take our youngest child with me) until I got word from Jacinda Ardern that I absolutely could not.

I had zero stress when I thought about how our family would manage logistically and financially for four weeks of lock-down. My husband earns well and can work from home. His office is sound-proof. We also have an online business that sells a product that was deemed 'essential' and we employ a person who thankfully runs it from his home. We have a large sports field in front of our home and a lot of space in our home. I always have a fully stocked pantry and fridge and I know how to bake and cook and sew and fix things. As a woman who rather enjoys the company of her husband, I was pretty excited to spend more time with him as normally his work takes him away for long days. My children were all 'free-movement' and 'free-play' babies so they have had hours and hours of practice entertaining themselves and finding things to do to keep themselves

creatively occupied and engaged. We had the resources and skills already to manage for the month and if we needed it, longer.

Once the dust settled over this exciting and strange time, I realised very quickly that all of this was not the case for many people in New Zealand. I am aware of what privilege I have, and I think about it every day. My gratitude knows no bounds for my up-bringing, the choices I have been able to make, my ability to access resources and how plentiful those resources are for a person like me. Our family thrived at home with each other. We have a loving and patient family culture and we have always modelled compassion to our children. They are secure and attached, but also happy by themselves and with each other. Because of the Lock-down, our relationships with each other are a million times closer and we observed a real sense of love and camaraderie from our three children with each other. We are the lucky ones, and we know this. Very, very lucky

Despite all this beauty in the peace and calmness of the new world, I found myself itching to return to TLC as soon as Level Three was announced. I missed the routine and I missed the children and their families. I missed my colleagues and I missed getting a lunch break. Again, I had zero stress at the idea of returning to work, except perhaps at the idea of doing the commute each day. I was confused (but understanding) by teachers in the wider ECE community who were not as comfortable as I was to rush

THE LUCKY COUNTRY CONTINUED



back to work. Marie, Ania and Elena provided our team with clear, fair and quite frankly incredible information about how we would make it work for one another and for our TLC community. I wasn't worried about getting sick because after 20 years in this profession, I appear to have the immunity of an ox. I just wanted to do my bit, be on the front-line, and get our micro-society moving again.

I see ECE as an essential service - I always have. The whole reason I got into ECE was so that parents could access early learning centres that employed teachers who were intelligent, respectful, and empathetic to be with their children when parents could not. Without us, parents and caregivers cannot go to work and do their jobs happily and without added stress. I imagine a world where parents, (let's be honest, particularly mothers) are expected to care for, entertain and raise their children, all while trying to prepare for and lead Zoom meetings, complete documents and fulfil their quota of work hours. Without compassionate, intelligent and organised ECE teachers, the lives of families would look very different.

Towards the end of the Lock-Down my friends from the restaurant and I had a very drunken Face-Time. I mentioned my plans to return to work as soon as I was able to and my intention to bring my youngest with me. "Why?! Are you crazy? Why would you put yourself and your daughter at risk! You don't have to be there! You can afford to stay home - why are you doing this? Stay home!" In my gin-fuelled state I was able to make them understand as I calmly

explained: "I'm not a Dr or a first responder. I don't work at the supermarket or deliver food. But I am definitely an essential worker, and I am very, very happy to be on this particular front-line."

Written by Sanna

Magda Gerber

"YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN. YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU DO."

CONSIDERABLY LUCKY

An important aspect of the TLC philosophy is the inclusion of parents and family/whānau in the education of their children. This collaboration reflects the Māori way of life with its warmth and extended family relationships. TLC recognises the importance of the wisdom grandparents instil in their grandkids. Grandparents share with their grandkids family history, stories about their parents, family photos, heirlooms, treasures and their experiences. As a teacher at TLC I have witnessed many times excited grandkids waiting for a grandparent visit or pickup. The yearly grandparent day offered at TLC is truly a wonderful experience for parents, children, grandparents and teachers. I am a grandparent and consider myself very lucky to have 4 wonderful, beautiful grandchildren. I feel the bond I share between myself and the grandkids is unique and meaningful. It is a relationship that differs from that of a parent and child and the pleasure which I feel in having grandkids seems to be universal among my friends. We are always exchanging experiences, texting and showing off photos. My time spent with grandkids is an adventure and is mostly conflict free. There are no grizzles, tantrums or tears, only giggles, smiles laughter and a certain amount of mischief which is part of the fun. My grandkids say the cutest things, which leave me chuckling to myself because they are often very true. "Nana you have crooked toes", "woo what big undies", "poppa slow legs", "stop talking Dianne". They watch, look and listen to me and feel I am important and can do no wrong. My tuneless singing voice makes them smile, my funny voice stories make them laugh, my cuddles are welcomed with open arms and I tend to overindulge them in many special treats. I am aware of the preciousness of every moment I spend with my grandkids and want them to have as many magical memories of their time with me as possible. When I reflect on what I have written about my grandkids, I immediately think of Magda Gerber's Educaring® approach: "An Authentic child is one who feels secure, autonomous, competent and connected". I sense this when I am with my grandkids and as a grandparent I thank TLC for their realisation of these beliefs.



Written by Dianne

Beginners Gardening



Over the last six months I've been experimenting with what grows successfully up in the top garden. Some successes, some fizzes (where were those fields of pumpkins and sunflowers??). I blame the drought! Next year I'm putting umbrellas over the beds of seedlings so they can drink and not fry. I've been finding what vegetables/fruit and flowers engage the children's interest and can survive young gardeners who are eager to "weed" and sample.

Beginners Gardening

The children loved the broadbeans I grew over winter (made into creamy pasta). The plants were allowed to grow rampantly and when they were full of pods in early spring, the children could pull the whole giant plants out. They then had the task of finding the pods and shelling them.

"The joy of gardening is the pleasure of seeing/tasting and sharing the results of effort".



Hopefully creating an edible garden will have the result of the children trying their hand at gardening and seeing the link between gardening and healthy eating.



Over the winter months I have a few projects that myself and the teachers will work through. We hope to continue to engage the children's curiosity and interest in caring for living things and experience the wonder of natural science and sustainability. To be continued.....



Written by Helen

4 YEARS OLD

WHEN CONFLICTS WERE ALLOWED
4 YEAR OLDS LEARNING THROUGH CONFLICT



Here is a scenario I experienced in my first couple of months working at TLC.

A and **B** both want to wrap some fabrics around the metallic triangle frame to make a hut. **A** has gotten a few while she started working on her project. When she ran out of her fabrics, she saw **B** approaching the same triangle frame that she was working on. She went up to **B** gesturing to take the fabrics for herself.

"I am making a hut." She said.

B replied: "But I am trying to help."

A: "But you are supposed to share."

They went back and forth in circles with this conversation and the emotion was high, voices were getting louder.

My attention was drawn to them. I was itching to jump in, but part of me was remembering Janet Lansbury's words to "**wait rather than putting a time limit to conflicts**", so I paused and watched.

C was also with the two. He was slightly older and not involved in this project. He inserted his opinion at this point:

"But it is not sharing if you take this from **B**."

"It is not sharing if you take this from me." Echoed **B**.

"But I am using this frame." **A** said.

"How about also using the smaller frames." **C** tries to reason.

"But I want to use the big one." **B** protested.

"But I am using it." **A** insisted.

"But that's not sharing." **C** tried to reason.

It was all going around in circles in my opinion. My intervention urges were high, but they did not seem to take things physically at that point, so I made myself standby again.

After a good few rounds of the discussion and negotiation, everyone retreated to silence. Then **B** went to get one smaller frame. **C** went on helping **B** to get another one. **B** then used all her fabrics on the smaller one and made a little hut, while **A** continued working on the big one. **B** hovered around the big frame and then got a few more fabrics out. **A** let her help. They worked together for a little bit, not for too long, until **B** decided to do something else.

4 YEARS OLD CONTINUED

I believe that one can't always 'wait out' a conflict situation. Sometimes intervention is necessary, especially when there is a risk of physical harm or when some of the children involved, are stuck in a pattern. However, in situations when you can wait out for the children, you can see that they can sometimes solve the conflicts by themselves. These are moments of realisation as to how capable the children are.

I was in awe how these children empowered themselves by taking different standpoints and strategies in this conflict situation. **C** took the leadership to become a mediator. **A** defended her own project. **B** was showing great flexibility and the ability to take advice from others. They all approached the conflict in their own unique ways. Because they are four year olds, they have already accumulated language to help themselves. They can elaborate rules and social expectations, such as sharing, to help negotiate their points of view when in a conflict. These particular three children were also able to see things from another child's point of view and make compromises. In other words, they were fully equipped to solve this particular conflict. It would have been a totally different scenario if I was too hasty and provided them with a script of conflict resolution just to end the agony of me watching a series of conflicts happening. My lesson is to 'trust they are able'. This is one of the RIE® mantras I hold dearly to my heart being a teacher inspired by Magda Gerber's Educaring® Approach.

It is important to note though, in the Tui room, we have been having extensive discussions on whether children's physiological and social needs were met on that particular day. Do we have consistent rules and expectations for the children to feel emotionally and socially safe rather than overpowered by the urge to test power.

Janet Lansbury has written excellent articles on conflicts from the RIE® perspective. After coming to work at TLC,

I've revisited her theories again and again for many situations I encountered, and found them very helpful for my practice. I would like to share some of her insights here, and hopefully you will also find them helpful in situations where children are in conflicts.

Below is the quote from Janet Lansbury's article "Helping Toddlers Resolve Conflict: Rules of Engagement" (<https://www.janetlansbury.com/2013/09/helping-toddlers-resolve-conflicts-rules-of-engagement/>), it is still very relevant to four year old children even though the title says Toddler.

DON'Ts

1. Don't resolve conflicts for them
2. Don't neglect to protect
3. Don't shame or lecture by pointing out the obvious
4. Don't speak in exclamation points, use an angry tone or expression
5. Don't take sides

DOs

1. Make "remain neutral" your mantra
2. Acknowledge both sides (sportscasting)
3. Protect children by preventing hitting, pushing or repetitive toy taking calmly and confidently, and shadow a child who seems to be having a difficult day.
4. Let infants and toddlers take toys, because this is on their short list of "playing together" possibilities. Only intervene to protect an older toddler's more elaborate projects or when a child seems stuck in a pattern of toy taking.
5. Keep an open mind – This means allowing children to do it their way, which will be different from our way most of the time. Trust is our biggest challenge.
6. Wait rather than putting a time limit on conflict, even if it seems intense. If no one's getting hurt, it is healthy for children to release these feelings.

Written by Peng

Following the RIE approach, we start with the least amount of help and intervention, and then slowly increase it. We do expect and trust that even infants learn most by working out conflicts all by themselves.

Magda Gerber

Source: <https://www.magdagerber.org/blog/category/sharing>

“HINENGARO: THE FEMALE WHO IS KNOWN AND ALSO HIDDEN - THE MIND.” - DR RANGIMARIE TURUKI ROSE PERE.

There is a theory that the poor treatment of women by society correlates with the instability of the society to which they belong. Security for women leads to stability for society. There's another theory which states that the way humans have treated Papatūānuku, our Earth Mother, reflects the way that wāhine have been treated. Wāhine make up the majority of those who work in care-based roles, with the wellbeing of tamariki being inextricably tied to the wellbeing of the significant wāhine in their lives. So what do we do to ensure the wellbeing of our kaiako wāhine? At TLC there is an innate understanding of the interconnectedness of the people who make up the TLC whānau. The vision and approach of 'educaring' applies not only to the children, but also to the teaching staff who are employed to implement it.

In order to provide optimal care and education for tamariki we need to consider our own holistic wellbeing. Becoming well versed in the educaring approach at TLC forced me (in the most positive way) to become more self-aware. **“What we teach is ourselves”** was the concept that made an immediate and jarring impression on me. It taunted me as I tried to go about my daily business. I visualised the tamariki in my care as mini-me toddlers, shuffling about the Kākano room with poor posture and grimacing, rosacea-tinged faces. It turned out that role-modelling would entail a lot more than working on my posture, and that a bit more introspection would be required. Earlier in my career I believed that the best teaching I would do would involve choosing resources, setting up activities, singing songs, and teaching numbers, colours and letters. What I didn't quite grasp was the impression I would leave from all the moments in-between and all the unspoken moments - that by just being I was influencing. **The act of caring, my facial expressions, reactions and responses, the way I moved and the tone of my voice; these moments and aspects were where meaningful teaching occurred.**

"Our words matter far less to our children than what we actually think and feel. Our children are the most sensitive, receptive and perceptive audience we will ever encounter, and for them, our feelings and attitudes are transparent and contagious." Janet Lansbury

Initially, a teacher learning the educaring approach at TLC is not necessarily taught anything in the traditional sense. This is in keeping with the approach itself, as Magda Gerber tells us that self-learned lessons stick with us the longest.

“Be careful what you teach. It might interfere with what they are learning.”

Magda Gerber.

When I first started working at TLC, I wondered why I wasn't being told explicitly what I needed to do. Apparently my authentic self was the best starting point, but what if, despite already a decade of working in early childhood education, that 'authentic self' was someone so subconsciously afraid of doing anything wrong that they needed to be shown what to do; stuck in a perpetual state of 'fake it til you make it'?

“When allowed to unfold in their own way and in their own time, children discover, manifest, and inspire the best in themselves and in others.” - Magda Gerber (sub in the word 'teachers' for the word 'children' and you'll get my gist.)



HINENGARO - CONTINUED

New to feeding an infant in my lap RIE style, I was told in a gentle, matter of fact way that I looked uncomfortable. Was I? As it turned out, I was. I wasn't attuned to myself in the slightest. And it is important that we tune into to our thoughts and feelings because of the young bodies and minds of our tamariki who involuntarily receive our subliminal messages – our discomfort becomes the infants discomfort. Although looking inwards can be challenging and even devastating, because some of us have brains wired to feel wrong for our 'negative' emotions, or for our instinctual responses and urges, it can also be rewarding.

Just as we do for tamariki, teachers are entrusted with experiencing and making sense of happenings in their own unique way. Strengths are highlighted; strategies and techniques for developing 'deficits' are role-modelled. Challenging thoughts and emotions aren't suppressed, but acknowledged and worked through. Just as we don't always tell children how to do things but simply do things ourselves and trust that they will notice, teachers are trusted to notice, respond and find their own way. This process allows us to role-model self-respect, resilience, and rangatiratanga - dispositions that will serve our tamariki in their learning experiences throughout life.

In the course of my exposure to the Educaring® Approach, my attention was drawn to my own physical, mental and emotional comfort and discomfort in the most subtle ways. As my mentors and colleagues got to know me, they learned when to step in to support me and when to step away and "hand the competency back over to me," as Elena often says. That small, seemingly insignificant moment of considering my own wellbeing when seated in an armchair assisting an infant with their kai triggered a journey of self-discovery, culminating in a recent liberating and validating diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Empowered, valued and self-aware, I had been afforded a sense of security and belonging, not only within my place of employ, but as a human in the world. The educator had become the educatee – or maybe the other way around. As I've learned, the educaring model resists describing learning in absolute terms – it's a complex, interwoven structure that stretches on perpetually, for as long as we continue to respect and place trust in each other and ourselves.

“Having respect for the world is when you allow people to be what they are.”

Magda Gerber.

Written by Gemma





A SNAPSHOT OF MY TIME AT TLC BY JAYSHREE CHARAN

I JOINED THE TLC TEAM ON JAN 20TH, I HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR 2 MONTHS BEFORE WE WENT INTO LOCKDOWN.

A bit about me: I started out as a nanny working for a family for xx years. After enrolling for my (BEd) I continued to work part time, both nannying and ECE. After graduation I did the obligatory 2 years in the UK nannying. Returning back to NZ I found work in a small centre in Mt Eden that was Reggio Emilia based. These experiences have given me good variety and have contributed to shaping who I am as a teacher. There is one thing that is the same throughout all my jobs with children, and that would be the love, joy and time spent with each child.

WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT MY JOURNEY HERE AT TLC SO FAR...

Well one thing for sure is that when starting out at a new job it's scary!

I had all these thoughts... would I fit in? Will I be able to build those relationships? What is my position in the centre? and many more.

I remember my first day stomach all twisted as I walked down the hill from Ponsonby rd. I could feel the nervous energy in me but as I stepped into the centre all that met me was kind, friendly and passionate teachers.

AT THE END OF MY FIRST WEEK I REMEMBERED ASKING MYSELF AM I DOING ENOUGH?

I had felt like I was sitting back watching and observing the children. How was I going to make those connections and relationships? (Again more questions) As I take a step back now I

wish I could tell myself then that "it's ok it will work out! An active observation is a powerful way to learn and participate"

Through stepping back and observing their play I see so much more about a child than if I was an active participant in their day. A beautiful moment I observed recently was a child climbing on top of the monkey bars going from one end to the other. In that moment I saw how agile and confident this child was with their motor skills. I know during this moment I was worried assuming the child may need help. Through the power of observation I got a chance to see the child's autonomy.

As the weeks have gone by I get to observe the different dynamics of the children. When they are in groups, the different areas of play or when they want a moment to them self. These are the moments where I get to see a snap shot of a child's personality, or a moment where they need support from a teacher. Each moment can be different, by observing instead of participating I get to see the child develop.

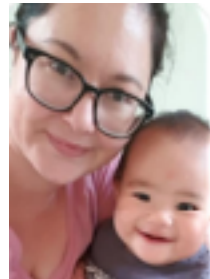
As I'm sitting at my parents place during lockdown, I have a moment to reflect and something I'm enjoying the most is sitting down at the table together for our main meal.

I enjoy having a good meal, talking, laughing at the table and being in the moment. This reminds me of being back at TLC where we bring all the children together to sit down where we all talk, laugh and enjoy a good meal as our own version of a family.

I am learning that to enjoy those moment and to take a step back where we come together to fill ourselves up both physically and mentally.

I look forward to continuing my learning and during at TLC.

A NEW WHĀNAU BY SHAHLIMA



Through a number of structured settling visits to TLC, I have seen you grow so much Skylar-Reese. You seemed so excited on your first day, waving your hands up and down and giggling so much as we got in the car and arrived at a new door. I even remember stopping and letting you feel some of the dark green leaves that brushed against us as we walked towards that new door because I felt you trying to reach out to them. The visits started off short initially, and later grew into longer visits that incorporated care moments such as feeding and sleeping. I really felt comfort as your Mum in knowing how respectful your Kaiako were as they got to know you and care for you.

I noticed as the visits progressed, so did your relationship with your Kaiako (with Kylie, Neeti and Sam in particular.) They worked closely with me, really paying attention to your home routine, likes, dislikes, interests, food etc. They were patient and communicated with me often about how your night or weekend would have been so that they can best cater to your needs once at TLC.

I have watched you really settle into the Kākano room, building a beautiful relationship (ngā hononga) with your key Kaiako, Kylie and currently with Vera who you are really getting to know and trust as your new Key teacher. I feel this unique approach to caregiving has had such a positive effect on the way you have settled in at TLC and am excited to continue to watch these relationships flourish.

The RIE® philosophy that has been taken to welcome you to TLC was handled with genuineness and care, and I was able to see this in the way you effortlessly began to jump and laugh when it was time to say goodbye and give you over to Kylie for a cuddle. You seemed calm. Skylar-Reese, you have really developed a sense of mana whenua (belonging) as you recognise this new space as your own and enjoy playing/ exploring on your mat or sometimes with peers that I hear like to bring you resources, which is nice.

You have built some self confidence, learning to self-soothe when your teachers are tending to your peers and prepare your meals. You have established a bond with Kylie and have learned to trust her. I watch you feel comfortable with her. I wonder if this is because she makes you feel very safe?

I feel that the culture and philosophy of TLC along with the value that is placed on reciprocal relationships, has contributed to an overall smooth and enjoyable settling experience for you and your mana atua (wellbeing). I think it is safe to say, you have made some new whānau, how lucky are we?

Kaiako: Shahlima Fitisemanu

Tamaiti: Skylar-Reese Perese

The Importance of the Secondary Teacher



Last year, some of you will know, I said farewell to my cohort of children that I had looked after since the start of their TLC journey. I was able to stay with my cohort until they left for school. Usually a teacher may stay with a cohort until they are 3, 3 1/2 years old during a cycle of continuity care, but I knew if I could, staying with the children until they left for school was something I really wanted to do and be a part of. In this time, I did have my own daughter, Vayda-lee, but I was lucky enough that I was able to be reunited with the children after 8 months of maternity leave and continue being their key teacher.

A position I came to know as an important part was the secondary teacher. This is a teacher that steps in for you when you need them to help care for your key children. This is a teacher that builds a relationship with the children. This is a teacher that gets to know the children's routines and their cues. This teacher plays a huge role in a child's learning journey at TLC. I was able to learn this first-hand as I was a secondary teacher to many children as I moved through each room with my cohort.

I was lucky enough to have children from a cohort above mine and a cohort below mine, join my cohort when we were in the Tūr space. This was an easy transition for the children because at some point through their learning journey I was there stepping into that role as a secondary teacher and building strong relationships with them. I was a familiar face for them, and they knew they could trust me to fulfil their needs and keep them safe, I was a solid base. This was also an easier transition for the parents. I was someone they were already comfortable with and someone that knew their children well.

"A RESPECTFUL BEGINNING IS AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR CHILD AND YOU, YOUR CHILD AND OTHERS, AND IN YOUR CHILD'S EXPLORATION OF THE WORLD."

-Magda Gerber

My own child has had a few changes of teachers due to teachers departing or taking on other key roles in the centre. But I know Vayda-lee, has been able to build relationships with her secondary teachers. These relationships have helped her to continue her learning journey knowing she has someone that knows her well, that can fulfil her needs and someone who will keep her safe

I feel it is essential to highlight the importance of the secondary teacher and that they play a vital part in a child's learning journey. Personally, from being a secondary teacher and as being a parent. Knowing first-hand how important these relationships are I am enjoying getting to know all the children in the Kākano room and the Weka room along with their families through their TLC journey.

Written by Kylie



NAPPY CHANGES

IN THE TUI SPACE & WHAT TO EXPECT



Before the Educaring® philosophy came into my life I would have viewed nappy changes as a chore. Something to rush through as quickly as possible to get on with the day.

Today I can honestly say nappy changes are a highlight of my day at TLC.

I now believe nappy changes are a perfect time for togetherness.

On an average day in the Tui space each child in a nappy may be changed 3-5+ times. (I have a handful of children in nappies and toilet learning so I spend quite a bit of time in the bathroom).

WHAT THIS MEANS IS I HAVE 3-5+ OPPORTUNITIES A DAY TO CONNECT TO EACH CHILD.

A nappy change in the Tui space starts from the invitation to the child leaving the bathroom after washing their hands.

It could look something like this... I notice a child's nappy is full and observe the child. Are they engrossed in activity, engaging with peers or, is their attention wandering? I try to wait and catch them in a moment in between busyness and quietly invite them to the bathroom.

“I can see your nappy is full, I'd like to take you to the bathroom now...”

We either walk together side by side to the bathroom or they run full speed in the opposite direction! I am ready for this and am unruffled by it.

“I can see you are interested in running right now. It is time to change your nappy. Let's go.”

For some children I will pick them up and carry them to the bathroom and this becomes a moment to connect. Our hearts touch as I hold them close, sometimes in a horizontal position and we gaze into each other's eyes with a smile on our lips.

As they make their way to the changing table I am ready. I have gloves, their nappy and cream within reach. Let's do this!

I ASK FOR COOPERATION ...

“Can you pull off your pants?”

“Can you take off your nappy?”

“Let's put your pants back on now. One foot, then two feet.”

And I offer choices...

“Do you want to sit on the toilet?”

“Do you want to stick your nappy tabs on?”

BUT...

Sometimes cooperation is not on the cards and children know just how to twist and turn to make changes tricky! This tells me something else might be going on and giving too many choices may not be right for this child.

“I can see you aren't wanting to do this right now. I'll help you.”

As I develop a partnership with each child I get to know their needs, how they like things done, and their different cues. That is why...

IT DEPENDS!

Through my time at TLC I am learning to unbusy my mind and approach each nappy change with peace in my heart. Instead of dreading nappy changes that had previously been challenging I know my attitude will set the tone of the experience. This allows me to show the children,

“Hey, you can test boundaries with me and I'll be here for you without judgement, shaming or anger. So when you are ready let's do this together!”

Written by Mikayla

AN AUTHENTIC CHILD

Three years ago, I came to TLC for my practicum. As a student teacher, I experienced a strong sense of belonging and security. This was because the TLC team held (and still holds today) the philosophy - "Do you know and see me? Do you let me fly?", not only for the children, but also for teachers, which drove me strongly to join this amazing team.

I feel so lucky that I can be my real self at TLC, which means hugely for me. I was raised to become what my parents and society want, not to become me, myself. I didn't understand why they were unhappy with me, even though I tried my best and I was a good student. I was confused that they wanted me to have a good life, but when I told them how happy and content I felt, they started to complain. I did not know that their complaints, frustration and insecurity were their feelings and emotions, and I didn't need to feel guilty.

THE FOREVER FLOWING RIVER

Over the years, I learnt to become the person who I want to be. As a teacher, I often ask myself, "Am I putting my own expectations on the children? Am I holding unnecessary concerns? Am I helping the child flourish as her unique self?" Children are like forever flowing rivers. They are born to grow, to learn and to continue their own journey. If we adults let go our own expectations and trust them, we'll see how they move around the rocks, how they go over the sticks and keep flowing forward. Just like water, they adjust when they meet obstacles and move on, not needing to be over worried about it.

Educaring® Approach

Our goal: An authentic child

An authentic child is one who feels secure, autonomous, and competent.

When we help a child to feel secure, feel appreciated, feel that "somebody is deeply, truly interested in me," by the way we just look, the way we just listen, we influence that child's whole personality, the way that child sees life.

— Magda Gerber

AN AUTHENTIC CHILD - CONTINUED

AN ONGOING PROCESS

When I was teaching the young children, there were times when I felt frustrated or even angry. I asked my colleague to step in, so she could talk to the child and I moved away to calm down. After talking with my colleagues, reading articles and reflecting on my feelings and teaching strategies, I realised that I was "stuck in the river" with my own emotions which were because of my expectations or personal experience. However, the river kept flowing. Children change, learn and grow all the time. Yes, there are days or certain stages, for all kinds of reasons that we struggle to cooperate with each other, to have a "good" day as we expected. However, it does not mean that it will be like this all the time. If I am aware of myself feeling stuck again, I will tell myself, "Relax, move on and let the children be themselves"

I am very proud of the kea children, my working partners, especially Alex, and myself. We have been being alongside each other since the Kākano room. We always share our own feelings and listen to others'. We grew together, and we knew each other well - interests, knowledge, and skills. Now with their increasing language skills, the kea children are able to express themselves even clearer: "I'm hungry!" "I need tissue because I got a runny nose!" , "Can I have more food, please?"

Magda Gerber said:

"IF YOU WANT AN INFANT TO BE AUTHENTIC, YOU HAVE TO BE INTERESTED IN WHO THAT LITTLE PERSON REALLY IS. THAT MEANS THAT THE LESS YOU ASSUME ABOUT THAT BABY, THE MORE YOU WILL LEARN."

I have been observing the roses in my garden over the last days. I watched them in rainy days when they were still buds. I was excited to see one of them blossom. In this warm sunny afternoon, they look like this now. This makes me think that I don't know today's

kea children. I wonder where they are at now? What are they interested in these days? What are their understandings about the people and things happening in their lives?

It is easy to see the growth of the roses. However, do I really know each child's development? I cannot read their minds. I cannot truly know why they are frustrated, sad, angry or happy.

I would love to listen to the children. I would love to listen to the whānau - what they want to share with me. I would love to clear my mind, focusing on the children and just observe.



EMPOWERING
OURSELVES -
EMPOWERING
CHILDREN...THE
GIFTS OF THE
EDUCARING®
APPROACH.
MAKE TIME...TAKE
TIME

GIFT OF EDUCARING

“WHAT WE TEACH IS OURSELVES” Magda Gerber’s reminder to slow down, gentle our hands and tone of voice, to wait for children to respond rather than rush in. All elements of respectful care that underpin practice and describe our ways of being, but not necessarily our state of mind. Lately I’ve been reflecting on well-being from the adult perspective for **‘WE ARE NOT ROBOTS...’ IN ENID ELLIOT’S WORDS.**

In doing so I wonder about the nuances. The messages that we give children, the examples we set, albeit indirectly. The ones that tell children that in teaching respect, we need to respect ourselves too. Not in a selfish way but rather to show it’s reciprocal nature and in ways that remind children of what it is to be authentic, to know that consistent boundaries will be set and even to say, I won’t read with you right now... I won’t let you hit me... How do I teach respect if I don’t respect myself? If I allow myself to become exhausted, don’t take breaks or allow myself time to regroup, how can I possibly be physically and emotionally present for children?

I’ve come to view Magda’s pearls of wisdom as gifts. The value we place on caregiving as language rich moments which fill up a child’s emotional tank - liberating. The only goal to bring pleasure to the moment - for all of us. To see these moments as our ‘time with’ children. To linger longer so that children are left with the lingering feeling of being loved. Their play - ‘time away’ during which I am free to spend time with another child or to sit back, sensitively observe, learn and enjoy.

The RIE® principles serving as inner guidelines even liberating. They free us of guilt and remove the pressures to teach, direct or intervene. They serve as a reminder to step in and out of moments with children gracefully. When necessary or if invited rather than to encroach. To offer just enough support possible and always ready to step back giving competency back to the children. Creating an environment that is physically safe, cognitively challenging and emotionally nurturing - a pre-requisite. The child who feels nurtured, will feel more secure in their sense of well-being and belonging and feel free to explore. Their natural curiosity, the motivation for play to unfold in wondrous ways that allow children to revisit what they are already working on and discover new possibilities on their road from emergent to mastery.

It is these things that enrich the child’s experience and foster relationships while making our own jobs more enjoyable. My intellect is teased, my thoughts tantalised by my observations. Observing from a point of wonder rather than knowing or based on assumptions. Can we ever really know what a child is thinking? Instead I am encouraged to reflect and layer my own knowledge in ways that unleash the full potential of the children within my care. My notions of children as competent is challenged by my own comfort zones. Reminders to slow down and observe more but most of all to work on myself. To learn to hold back on impulses to direct, distract or intervene. Relationships with parents and colleagues strengthened by a common desire to know the child. The reward - that children come to view themselves as self learners who are competent and have agency. The notion of children as self-learners and the

value we place on uninterrupted play a fundamental key to letting go.

Our vulnerabilities tested at times. There are natural tensions at times, that come from needing to step in as a responsible adult, even we are feeling discomfort or emotionally vulnerable. Moments when distracting or re-directing behaviour would knowingly alleviate this tension. But I wonder what we take away from children? Instead we are encouraged to acknowledge a child’s feelings, giving them time to work on their strategies until they become ingrained.

It is true, while we cannot always leave our ‘baggage’ behind, we need to find ways to set our troubles aside and enter the ‘third space’. Not yours or mine but ours. I take seriously my mentor’s advice to ‘shake my hands’ before entering into moments with children. This as a way to unbusy my mind and a start to understanding what it is to be physically and emotionally present with and for children. These are the nuances I refer to. The notion that we ‘teach’ not only skills but also the values, honesty, compassion, kindness, forgiveness and generosity.

We do so by example and never with force. Instead, we trust that with time children will come to respond authentically, with empathy and integrity. **RELATIONSHIPS, ARE THEREFORE THE HEART OF THE APPROACH.** Based on mutual trust, honesty and steeped in respect. Relationships that are forged over time rather than fleeting, and are empowering for adults and children alike.

Elena Marouchos

RIE® Associate



In 2018, Ania, Elena & Marie went to the RIE® Conference together.



TLC DATES

WHILE WE DO HAVE A PLAN, THIS IS 2020, AND ANY CHANGES WILL BE NOTIFIED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

AUG LAST WEEK OF AUG
Community Survey

SEP 8TH SEPT 7:30PM
Online Parent Evening - Setting Boundaries

SEP DATE TBC
Centre wide transition

OCT SEE ANIA FOR DATES
Upstairs Parent Evening

FEB SEE ANIA FOR DATES
Downstairs Parent Evening

UPCOMING SOCIAL

All the usual social events, such as the Grandparents & Special Persons afternoon tea are being cancelled this year because of Covid-19, and the desire to keep everyone as safe as possible, especially vulnerable elders.

We will review the end of year party closer to the time.

DEC THU 10TH DEC
End of Year Party - TBC

TLC CLOSEDOWN

25 DEC 2020 - TLC **WILL**
CLOSE
Normal hours Thu 24th
No Fees or Charges from 25th Dec - 4th Jan. Please update APs.

05 JAN 2021 - TLC REOPENS
Normal hours and fees and charges recommence from Tue 5th Jan 2021. Please update your APs.

ADMINISTRATION

SOME ADMIN STUFF FROM AMY & MARIE

DIGITAL SIGN-IN

- Each person, who is authorised to pick up your child(ren) has their own unique PIN number, to protect your child(ren), **please do not share your PIN**
- Once a week, the Ministry of Education requires us to get a confirmation of attendance physically signed off. This will be available Monday following.
- If you forget to sign your child in or out, the system will ask you for this information the next time you sign in with your PIN.
- We would ask you to please remember to sign-in or out, as we will use this information in the case of an emergency to know which children are on site for a roll call. This is now also extra important for contact tracing.

The Digital sign-in should speed up and smooth out the drop-off and pick up processes, help save the environment with reduced paper and printing, and save lots of data entry time. We appreciate your support in making this a success. Unfortunately, sometimes TLC can have some internet issues. When this happens we ask parents to physically sign in on a piece of paper.

Weekly Attendance Sheets- The Ministry of Education still requires us to have a physical signature confirming the children's attendance, once a week. These are kept in the upstairs, Kea and Tui sign-in stations. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

EXTRA DAYS & TIMETABLE CHANGES

Extra Days and Timetable Changes- We require an Attendance Form to be signed for any extra days or timetable changes. These can be printed off for you and placed in your child's kete for you to sign or feel free to email a signed copy back to us.

NEW! PARENT PORTAL

TLC now has a parent portal, where you can update your own emergency contact details, check your child(ren)'s timetable bookings, and check your own account.

See: <http://thelearningcentre.co.nz/parent-portal>

- Enter your email address that you put on the enrolment form
- Click on 'Reset Password'
- The portal will email you a temporary password, which you can use to log in and then change your password
- Once you have logged on, you will see a list of children for whom you are the primary caregiver; click on the child's name, and then scroll down to see Timetables, and also Account transactions.

Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns,

tlcadmin@thelearningcentre.co.nz

COMMUNITY SURVEY

We will be sending out our community survey in the next few days, and will aim to get all responses collated and published during September.

We encourage you to participate in this. We DO listen to community feedback, and have made changes in the past in response to this feedback. For example, the change to our Invoicing processes, so that invoices were no longer manual, but driven by our enrolment data.

Of course, the community survey is not the only way that we engage with our community, and we encourage you to enquire about joining our Parent Voice Committee, who try to meet once a month. If you are interested, please contact sanna@thelearningcentre.co.nz.

Would you be more likely to participate if it was possible to dial into the meeting rather than attend in person?



**“EVERYTHING IS
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL”**

Magda Gerber

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