Building Communities – Begins in the early years with early childhood services and professional teachers
Working alongside your community

Ma tini ma mano ka rapa te whai

By many, by thousands, the work (project) will be accomplished; Many hands make light work; Unity is strength
Research and Experience examples

Drawing on five research projects that I have been involved with over the last ten years AND

Experiencing society-transforming earthquakes in New Zealand (and Japan) since 2010....
...has provided me with the evidence that early childhood places and spaces can be re-understood as places for community wellness and family resilience
ECE and natural disasters: The NZ experience

Both NZ and Japan in 2011 experienced the power of earthquakes and water to transform all that we know, have felt safe and secure about, and to change our life experiences completely.
The Christchurch Experience

- September 4th, 2010 - 7.1
- December 26th, 2010 - 5.5
- February 22nd, 2011 - 6.3
- June 13th, 2011 - 5.7, 6.2
- December 23rd, 2011, 6
- + more than 10,000 other quakes to present day
Christchurch, New Zealand

- Loss of lives
- Liquifaction
- Destroyed homes
- Destroyed public facilities
- Ruined infrastructures
- Damaged and ruined educational facilities and buildings
New expression of community

Solnit (2009) – ‘extraordinary communities that arise in disaster’:
people do not act as selfish individuals, prone to violence, mayhem, looting, as supposed, but rather neighbours turn to one another, strangers become rescuers in the streets and the buildings, and whole populations turn their gaze to help stricken areas
Prime Minister of NZ: John Key (18 March 2011)

We have learned the power not only of individuals who have done more than they ever dreamed they could have, but also the power of a community, whether it’s a neighbourhood, a school, a nation or the international community. We have witnessed in these past three weeks the very best of the human spirit. We have seen the coming together of a city, and of a nation. We have learned a lot about our capacity to do good. There is much talk that ours is a selfish generation, focused only on money and individual gain. What I have seen in our country, and especially here in this city since February 22 puts the lie to that. I have seen people who are resilient, capable, practical and compassionate. New Zealanders have been generous and brave.
Solnit (2009):

Power usually held by the elite, is devolved to people ‘on the ground’, and that localised responses demonstrate how as people we ‘desire’ connection, participation, altruism, and purposefulness
Disaster sometimes knocks down institutions and structures and suspends private lives, leaving a broader view of what lies beyond. The task before us is to recognise the possibilities visible through that gateway and endeavor to bring them into the realm of everyday. (Solnit, 2009, p. 313)
The role ECE services play in a community can be highlighted in times of emergency and disasters – but will families turn to their ECE centre or service if they are not familiar with the service playing this role?
Earthquake - ECE

It’s like you are grieving because I don’t have the parent support now.... I like being with other mothers and being supported.

(Debbi Agnew, Dallington Playcentre)
My research over the last decade

Early Childhood Education and Care Services (ECEC) “natural places” for providing links between families within their communities
Challenge to traditional child-centred pedagogy
Strong communities, strong networks support, strong families
EC teachers, services, training providers rethinking how pedagogy, professionalism, and practices assist parents and communities
Studies within ECEC in NZ – supporting parents and community

- Duncan, J., Te One, S. with Central Baptist Kindergartens Whānganui (ongoing). *Active adult participation in ECE: Enhancing child learning and community wellness.*
- Duncan (2008). *New Zealand Kindergartens - Just another early childhood service or a distinctive part of New Zealand culture?*
ECE services

- Education and Care (Childcare)
- Kindergarten
- Te Kohanga Reo
- Playcentres
- Homebased
- Pasifika centres
Points of difference from Canadian ECE

1. ECE educators are called Teachers
2. ECE Teachers must have a three-year degree in Teaching (either ECE, or Primary teaching since 2011), share the same Union, and Kgtn teachers have pay parity with Public school teachers
3. Kindergarten is for 2-5 year olds; children begin school at 5 years of age (on their birthday)
NZ ECE (2)

- ECE students are taught in Universities, or in Private Training Establishments who have been credited with being able to offer degrees
- All ECE centres share the same legislated curriculum: Te Whāriki;
- Teacher-led services: share the same regulations and funding
- Parent-led services: have different regulations and funding from teacher-led
See projects at www.tlri.org.nz
Whanganui Central Baptist Kindergarten and Preschool
• 22 percent of the population identify as Māori
• Lower post-school and school qualifications than rest of NZ (with higher % of Māori in this category than rest of NZ)
• Higher number of single parent families than national average
• Lower incomes than national average

• Actively & intentionally involving ourselves in the community

• Active, intentional and ongoing relationship building with whānau

• Facilitating active and intentional linking: whānau to whānau; whānau with services
Whanganui Central Baptist Kindergarten and Early Learning Centres

- Parent Education
  - Strength based

- Participation & Engagement

- Parent Support

- Recently identified gaps in our community

- Social supports & Informal networks

- Parent Partnerships

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Teaching & Learning Research Initiative

To Whare Itiwhanga a Whakaa
Education in New Zealand
Emerging Parent Support & Development
~ a community of learning

Parent Education
Strength Based
- Attachment
- Brain development
- Budgeting
- SKIP
- Boundaries
- Toolbox
  - Early years
  - Middle years
  - Teen
- Informal connections
  - Parent to parent,
  - Teacher, coordinator
- Home visits
- SPACE

Parent Support
- Choices in Early Childhood Education; TKR, Playcentre, Kindergarten, Schools
- Parent Support Group
  - Single Parenting
  - Create n Take
  - Cuisine
  - Allergy Support
  - Mums N Bubs
  - Body Basics
  - Home Visits
- Events
  - SKIP events
  - Community events

Participation & Engagement
- Kidz @ 303
- Early Childhood Centres
- Schools
- Te Kohanga Reo
- Kura Kaupapa
- Programmes offered by other providers

Recently identified gaps in community
- Intermediate Years - parent support
  - SPACE (alongside mainly first time parents)
- Maternal Wellbeing — support group
- Supporting parents courses — Toolbox
  - 6—12 years & Teenage years
  - ‘Older’ mums (40 plus)

Parent Partnerships
- Family/whanau profiles
- Teaching teams
- Baptist Kindergarten Senior Teacher — professional development of curriculum
- CBK staff research

Social Supports & Informal Networks
- Advocate for Children who witness violence
- Antenatal
- Birthright
- Barnadoes
- Akoranga Child Care
- Budget Advice
- Celebrating Parents
- Central Baptist Church
- Community Mental Health
- CYF
- Early Childhood Centres
- Family Start — Te Puea whanau
- Family Support Services
- Family Works
- HIPPY
- Jigsaw
- Keith St School
- Keith St Kindergarten
- Life to the Max
- Open Home Foundation
- Maternal Mental Health
- Midwives
- PAFT
- Plunket
- Post Natal Depression
- Public Health
- Schools
- SKIP
- Te Oranganui
- Violence Intervention Network
- Wanganui Learning Centre
- WINZ
Research Aim:

Develop innovative, appropriate and responsive ways to work with the community in ways that are sustainable in everyday ECE pedagogical practices
Propose a new discourse

• Reconceptualising ECE centres as places for
  – adult participation
  – active teacher-whānau partnerships
  – positive holistic outcomes for children
  – Enhancing community wellness.

• ECE centres and services building community connectedness
Methods and tools

- Interviews
- Cameras
- Pedagogical documentation
- Mapping
- Event recording
- Journals
- LEARN site

- Teachers and researchers collaborative action
- Jointly decided approaches trialled
- Cyclical approach across all four centres
Research question

How does active adult participation in early childhood education enhance positive outcomes for children and their whānau?
Research

• Teacher – Parent interactions, Parent to Parent interactions: Mapping
• Building connections: Seeing and Being Seen
• Children’s learning: Golden Thread, Teachers conferencing
• Community wellness: CBK as a ‘platform’
Who does what?

• How are families involved in your centre/service?
• What do members of the family do?
• Who decides?
• Who initiates?
Mapping parents’ movements and interaction: education
Mapping Movements and Interactions

Interaction patterns depend very much on seeing and being seen. Often the need and motivation for informal and unplanned encounter arises only in the very moment of seeing someone. The more someone sees – and is seen – the larger the possibilities for interaction. (Sailer & Penn, 2007, p.10)
So – Active Adult Participation

• Consider how the spaces were occupied and their uses

• How “space” and “place” may promote or inhibit social interaction between adults

• Identify patterns of interactions within each space/place
Kindergarten - Lunchtime - Friday 26-11-2010
How adults were currently using the space
What changes have resulted from teacher review of the data?

- Team sharing of the data
- Awareness of adult movements
- Centre layout and environment
- Awareness raised of teacher positioning in environment
- Patterns of adult movement
- Ways of interaction with the environment
- Where interactions were taking place
- Where adults linger
Re-view after the changes
Active Adult Participation

- Welcome
- Belonging
- Engagement with teachers, engagement with other adults
- Teachers: Seeing other adults and being seen by other adults
- Parents: Seeing other parents and being seen
Connections – Seeing and Being Seen
Whanganui Central Baptist Kindergarten and Preschool
Focus – Parent to Parent connections
I have made friends who I wouldn’t have met under any other conditions except from the [centre]. And because they live locally, it’s very easy to have a true friendship. You start out just chatting and walking together ... and go to their houses, and they come to my house, and it’s the children that know each other. It’s something that I always thought was important. That you attend the facilities in your neighbourhood. That you don’t live here and go to school across town. And it’s for those very reasons, it creates, I don’t know, a feeling of community, that you count, that you belong, that people notice you, that you notice them. (Parent #18) – Family resilience study
Participation as access to community

- Spending time at the centre:
- Increased friendships
- Links with others in the community
- Friendships for the children and play opportunities outside of centre
Structural opportunities

- Dropping and collecting time
- Participation in the programme
- Attending social events
- Becoming a committee member
Dropping off and collection times

- Clusters of parents arriving and leaving at the same time
- Active interactions and links being facilitated by the staff
- Shared transporting
Urban Parent: I think there’s a re – like there’s the sense of community not just – just being part of a family, which I thinks important, but the fact that you’re networking, you might just walk home with another group of kids, you know, the same direction or …you might meet up at the park and the kids – kids just feel like they – they know other people. And I mean my childcare, because I don’t have family here, are usually my Kindy friends, you know, whereas I didn’t even know any of the parents at the childcare centre.
Participation

- Spending time at the centre:
  - Increased friendships
  - Links with others in the community
  - Friendships for the children and play opportunities outside of centre
Discussion

• How does your centre set-up support and encourage (or not) adult involvement

• Is your centre ‘family friendly’?

• What are your patterns of interaction with adults as they arrive in your centre?
Parent Participation and Children’s Learning Outcomes

THE GOLDEN THREAD

Robyn Lawrence

(Adelaide September 2002)
THE GOLDEN THREAD:
Active parent participation

How does active parent participation enhance children’s learning outcomes?

Looked for this THREAD through all the children’s learning stories
This morning Rory was playing with the shape sorter when Kim left. Normally we would take Rory to the windows to wave to his Mum (part of his settling-in routine) but today he seemed quite settled so we left him playing. However a short while later Rory was unsettled and not easily consoled. I wondered if it was because we hadn’t followed his morning routine and when the blocks and the toy animals didn’t calm him, I took him in my arms and went to the window that gives a view of the rest of CBK and the gate that Kim always pauses at to give a last wave to Rory (even though by this time he’s usually more interested in the cars and trucks coming down the street — sorry Kim!).

As we looked out the window this morning we saw a bus coming. “Look, there’s a bus,” I pointed out to Rory. He replied although I couldn’t understand what he was saying.

Then we saw a car. “Can you see the car?” I asked.

“Yes,” Rory replied.

We watched the cars and even a motorbike before we saw Tasha coming down the street. We waved to Tasha and watched her come into Kidz. By this time Rory was once again settled and happy to go off and play.

A little later in the morning Rory brought his profile book to me and we looked at it together. He pointed to the picture of him and Shane and said, “Dad.” Then we turned the page and saw the photos of the trucks.

“We looked out the window this morning and saw the bus and the cars and a motor bike, didn’t we?”

Rory nodded emphatically before closing his book and moving on to a new activity.

Routines and maintaining routines (particularly routines from home) are a very important part of the philosophy of Kidz@320 but this Learning Story shows how important a routine that had its beginnings in the centre is for Rory. Even though he was settled and happy for Mum to go, a short while later it seemed obvious that he missed that routine where he waves to Mum and watches the traffic down the street. I wasn’t sure if taking him to the window was a good idea (as he wasn’t going to see Kim) but just seeing the bus and cars settled him in a way that other attempts to console him had not.

Rory has been far more settled ever since that day where Shane spent some time with him in the centre but it also seems that Rory draws comfort from a familiar and predictable routine. Since Rory has also shown an interest in trucks and since he settled today when he was only able to see the traffic and not his Mum, I suspect that watching the cars is an important part of this routine.

Now that we’ve once again realized just how important this routine is for Rory we won’t be skipping it again!
I took two children who are almost 2 years old, for a visit to the crèche (2-3 year old area) in order to familiarize them with the environment and the teachers before they move here.

Several of the children at crèche recognized me from the time they had spent at KIDZ.

One of them got their portfolio book and brought it over to show me, pointing to the different photos and talking about what was happening. As I sat on the floor and showed an interest in this, I was very quickly surrounded by about 4 more children all wanting to show me their books.

One young man (who I know well) even took pictures off the wall to show me.

- The children are recognizing someone who is interested in them and are welcoming me to their space.
- They know that this is a place where they belong and feel comfortable and secure enough to share this with me.
- Communication is developing—the reciprocal interactions that occur between several people.

Adult Participation:
- I showed the children I was interested in them by being at their level, listening to them, looking at their pictures and talking to them. This was all it took to engage them.

Positive Child Outcomes:
- They know they are valued and important.

Robyne Huthnance
Out and About
Teacher conferencing

• Case study children (19 children)
Learning stories and wider knowledge of the children and their whānau with “Out and About Photos”:
1. Golden thread of learning (dispositional, schema)
2. Participation of whānau – in and out
3. Interactions from the ‘out and about’ photos
Understandings of Adult Participation and Children’s Learning Outcomes

• The more confident the parents and whānau were in the centres with the teachers and other parents, the more settled and socially confident their children were.

• Children shared the interests and topic/activity passions of the parents and whānau, and when parents shared these with the teachers this engaged other children’s interests and learning.
• Connecting parents with other parents within the centres enabled new friendships to be developed, both between the parents and between their children. These friendships built confidence for the children and their parents to participate more in the centres and the centres’ activities.

• As the parents became aware of their child’s learning progress and friendships within the centres they become more interested in attending and participating in the centre and the wider activities and support opportunities CBK afforded.
The children’s dispositional learning, tracked over time (2-3 years), demonstrated consistency and increasing competence in favoured areas of learning, and a range of strategies in less favoured areas of learning. Connections between the children’s less favoured areas of learning at CBK and their interests at home and community improved their confidence and skills over all areas of their learning at CBK.
• Becoming connected with the ‘people, places and things’ in the community within which CBK is positioned;

• Seeing ‘advocacy work’ as a part of the teaching and learning programme – for the children, whānau, CBK, and the community;
Being ‘alongside’ families – not the ‘experts’, not the ‘helpers’, not the ‘saviours’, but building, maintaining and promoting responsive and respectful relationships with families, connecting, networking, and supportive. The new positioning ‘alongside’ and ‘with’ families meant focusing on their goals and aspirations for their children and their families and whānau;
Being embedded in the community not just physically present in the community – shifting the gaze from ‘inside CBK’ to ‘outside CBK’. Different connections and positions became part of the everyday work of teaching and learning.
CBK as a “platform” for community wellness
Discussion

• Do **families** know your ECCE service? What would they say about it?

• Do your **communities** know your ECCE service? What would they say?

• What connections do you have with whānau in the community?

• What connections do you think whānau make between ECCE and community?
Acknowledgments

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• Thanks to the children of the Dunedin Hospital Childcare and Kindergarten Association for the use of their photos