

Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation

Shelagh Powell

On the weekend of 7, 8 and 9 May Danielle, Paula and I were fortunate to be able to attend this year's annual Early Childhood Council Conference held in Christchurch at the Convention Centre. The weekend was indeed action packed and we were treated to a number of excellent workshops with both national and international keynote speakers addressing a number of relevant issues, trends and topics that always inspire and provoke discussion and debate. Through their articles, Paula and Danielle will provide some insight to topics that are of interest to families. Likewise I am breaking from my traditional Courtyard Courier address and offering an article different from the usual, and one that can sometimes conjure up some food for thought.

One of the keynote speakers, Dr Louise Porter, was a Brisbane based child psychologist with over 25 years' experience in private practice consulting with parents and practitioners about children's developmental and social or emotional challenges. In her keynote address, Dr Porter questioned the ageism inherent in many beliefs about children, such as that they are 'attention seeking' and where does praise and rewards fit in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. I was particularly interested in her position on praise and rewards and therefore would like to share that perspective!

Young children learn from everything they do. They are naturally curious and inquisitive to explore the unknown. If their explorations and discoveries bring them pleasure or success they will want to learn more. Children who receive the right sort of support and encouragement in the early years will develop positive attitudes and dispositions for learning and will tackle new experiences and challenges with a sense of excitement and adventure. Children who do not receive the right sort of support and interactions will not have nearly the same positive outlook to learning.

As we know, children will do things simply because they want to, always striving for autonomy with every breath. Selecting what to wear, what to play with and even who to play with result in "intrinsic motivation". The act of choosing what to wear, what to play with etc. achieves satisfaction from both the act of choosing and from the opportunity to play with the toy or wear the favourite shirt/skirt again, even if it is dirty! Since the activity is generating the motivation, it is mostly self-sustaining for as long as the child wants the activity to continue.

On the flip side, children also engage in activities because adults tell them to, or in an effort to please parents, teachers, grandparents etc. These activities are "extrinsically motivated". This means the rewards come from outside the child, and requires being given by someone else frequently and repeatedly in order for the child to remain motivated. This means that it is more tiresome and difficult to sustain extrinsically motivated work because of the reliance on someone or something else to prolong it.

Being intrinsically motivated to choose an activity is more rewarding and children learn more from it and more importantly retain the learning better. Intrinsically motivated children are more involved in their own learning and development when they are inwardly pleasing themselves...satisfying that internal itch! Parents and teachers can build on this sense of confidence by guiding their child's play and activities, while still offering plenty of choices.

Difficulties arise when adults within the child's environment enforce external standards and replace the internal reward system with one that depends upon outside forces to supply all the rewards.

Inside this Issue ...

Profile: Denali Lord
Page 2

Chairperson's Report
Page 3

Freely Chosen Work
Page 3

Building Update
Page 4

Realistic Expectations
Page 5

Different Psychological
Perspectives
Page 5

Te Whariki
Page 6

Fundraising Report
Page 7

Profile: Damien Straw
Page 8

In Brief ...
Page 8

Children then begin to feel successful only when they are praised and rewarded by others for their accomplishments. Often children will lose that intrinsic motivation and only feel they have accomplished something successfully if someone tells them what a great job they have done over and over again. This diminishes self confidence and inner courage at being able to solve problems, choose challenging activities (even at the expense of getting it wrong, which in turn leads to greater learning), because of reliance on someone else and their judgment.

Rewards and Praise

Contrary to popular myth, there are many studies showing that when children expect or anticipate rewards, they don't perform as well. Some studies show that reward systems suppress children's creativity, because they discourage risk-taking. When children think they are going to be rewarded for something, they tend to avoid challenges and "play it safe", meaning they put in minimum effort in order to receive the accolades and ultimately a tangible reward.

Here is an example:

When an American fast-food company offered food prizes to children for every book they read, reading rates really shot up. On closer inspection, however, it was demonstrated that the children were selecting shorter books and comprehension test scores plummeted. They were reading for junk food, rather than intrinsic motivation. There are many more studies showing that, while rewards may increase activity, they can smother enthusiasm and kill passion. Individuals anticipating rewards lose interest in activities that were otherwise attractive. It appears the more we crave rewards, the more we dislike what we have to do to get it! In the first place it would have been better to have spoken to the children and asked what books they found enjoyable and interesting, as there is plenty of evidence to suggest that intrinsically enjoyable activities are the best motivators.

Avoiding praise and rewards does not mean holding back on the love and delight we feel for our children, nor our instinctual desire to encourage them...it's just all in the way we say things!

Here's a few suggestions for how to acknowledge and encourage your child, while avoiding the use of praise.

- **Focus the child on his/her own pleasure at achieving.** For example "you looked like you enjoyed that", or "how did it feel to do that?", "I'm glad you did that, you look happy with yourself".

- **Help him/her to self-evaluate.** For instance: "how do you like your drawing?" "Are you happy with the way you have done that activity?"
- **Ask them about their inner experience.** For example: "how do you feel about that?" "Did you enjoy sharing that piece of news?" "How did you come up with those ideas?"
- **Use "I" statements, instead of labelling the child.** For instance: "I like the colours you chose" instead of "what a good drawer you are". Instead of "good boy for sharing your toys", say instead "thanks for sharing with your friend today, that felt good to him and to me". An "I" statement creates an honest connection between you and your child while not interfering with how they see themselves.
- **Comment on the behaviour, not the child.** Let's say your child has just played soccer. Instead of saying what a great player he is, say "I really enjoyed watching the game today, and I really liked the way you kicked the ball to your team mates".
- **Avoid praise that compares your child to others:** Comparing is only motivating as long as your child comes first. If their competitive edge slips, your child may lose that intrinsic drive. Dr Porter shared with us an interesting fact. Did you know that more students drop out of Harvard University than any other, because students are so used to being first in class at every stage of their education, that they can't bear **not** always being first at University and so drop-out.

Mean what you say: A teacher here at the Courtyard shared with me how inadvertently she had often been saying to the children each day as they folded the washing "you are amazing, you could come to my house and fold my washing". To which a child replied "You always say that, but you never invite us". Mean what you say!

Is Praise ever OK?

Praise is great when we are not offering it with an ulterior motive. Praise should not be given in advance of something, nor guaranteed every time your child does something you like. Offer it when it is spontaneous and comes with meaning and authenticity and not as a ploy to get more of what you want from a child.

Final comment from me!

Yes we can get children to do what we want them to do...but here's the million dollar question, are they happy? Happiness can only come from being true to ourselves and doing what is intrinsically rewarding. Let us remember our preschool days should be filled with fun, laughter, exploration, curiosity and wonderment doing the things that make us happy and inwardly fulfilled.

Ka Kite, Shelagh



Profile

Denali Lord

Hi, I am Denali Lord and it is my pleasure to have recently joined the Board of Trustees. A bit about me: Prior to getting married to Richard I taught Year 5 and 6 at a local primary school for four years. I then decided it would be fun to have a bit of a change and co-ordinated After School Programmes and Kids Holiday Camps.

Sophie our eldest daughter has just turned four and has been enjoying being in Room 2's afternoon class for the last year and a half. Lucy our youngest can't wait to join her - and has been known to pack her kai and bag for when we drop Sophie off with the hope

that Paula might have put out a cup and plate for her and named a bag hook! I have been impressed with the Courtyard from the moment I walked in off the street to have a look.

I love creating all sorts of things crafty, reading, sewing, walking, spending time with my friends and family and would love to travel and live overseas with Richard and the girls sometime in the not too distant future.

Smiles, Denali

Chairperson's Report

Jeff Horn

The year is rushing by and we are now well into Term 2.

For those parents who don't know me I have been on the Board for three years, previously in the role of Treasurer. My daughter Sydney is in Room 1 and my two older children, Emily and Alexander have also attended but are now flourishing at Hoon Hay Primary, thanks I believe to the great start they experienced at the Courtyard.

There have been a number of changes to the Board of Trustees following the AGM in March. Siobhan Bergin stepped down as Chairperson after two years in the role. Thankfully we have not lost her experience or knowledge on the Board as she now holds the position of Vice-Chairperson and I will be relying on her advice and experience in the year ahead. A big thank you to Siobhan for her previous commitment to the preschool and the help she has already provided me. Kevin Riddle has taken on the role of Treasurer, replacing myself and we also have two new members on the Board, Damien Straw and Denali Lord. Together with Shelagh and Emma I believe we have a great range of skills on the Board and I look forward to working with them all.

Thank you to all who attended the AGM and a special thanks to those who provided reports detailing events over the previous year. This is an important avenue for the preschool to share its achievements with the community.

I would like to thank the teaching team for their effort over the past term and a half while the preschool has struggled to find a replacement teacher. This has put a lot of extra pressure on the team but their professionalism and commitment to the preschool has been greatly appreciated by the Board.

The upgrade to the outdoor environment has been approved by Council and work on this will begin at the end of Term 2. The Board believe this will be a great addition to the preschool and we look forward to its completion. A big thank you to Emma Godfrey for all the work she has done with organising, planning and implementing this plan.

I am honoured to be elected Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and look forward to the year ahead.

2010/2011 Board of Trustees

Jeff Horn – Chairperson & Licensee
Siobhan Bergin - Vice-Chairperson
Shelagh Powell – Principal
Kevin Riddle – Treasurer
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Freely Chosen Work

Shelagh Powell

“An interesting piece of work, freely chosen, which has the virtue of inducing concentration rather than fatigue, adds to the child's energies and mental capacities, and leads him to self-mastery.”

Maria Montessori (1995) The Absorbent Mind: Holt & Company pg.207

This is so true and so evident within a Montessori classroom. When children are provided with a prepared environment, given the opportunity, the freedom and the choice to work for their own creation and development, self-mastery becomes implicit in the child. Spontaneous work freely chosen by the child and carried out by the child through the journey of our Montessori work cycle (which means safe from adult intervention) befits a work of creation.

Nature has presented many gifts to a child, not least of which is energy and curiosity! Unfortunately, such energy is often squashed and seen as a source of irritation in the midst of the busy lives of adults. So too, in primary schools that are required to deliver a curriculum decided upon by those who do not necessarily understand the child's drive to do, to act independently, to work on their own interests at their own pace.

True Montessori preschools recognise the importance of offering children both the time and opportunities to actively explore the environment and pursue activities of their own choice. We may not understand the child's need for pouring water from one vessel to another for long periods of time, but for the child this is meaningful work, as they seek to lay inner foundations and building blocks for the future. As the pressure mounts towards children manipulating letters and numbers and reading at an increasingly younger age it appears this has taken precedence over the worth of affording children the chance to self-mastery across all domains.

Montessori said that we must have faith in the child to learn when they are ready and remember “Free choice is one of the highest of all the mental processes”.

Building Update

Emma Godfrey

As previously noted in the Courtyard Courier, the playground sub-committee has been working hard on the upgrade of our outdoor area. After much discussion and input from teachers we identified the need for an outdoor area that could be used all year round.

With this in mind we have worked with an architectural designer to design extensions to both classrooms. The plans have been out for Courtyard community feedback since February and we now have building consent. A building contractor has been appointed and we are scheduled to put the first peg in the ground on the last day of Term 2.

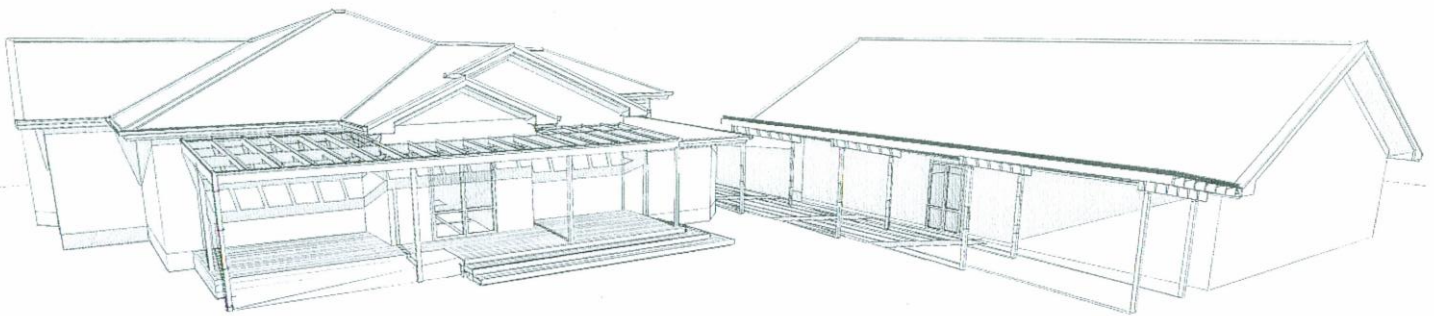
On return from the July break at the start of Term 3, both classrooms will have a waterproof, windproof outdoor area, with Room 1 having a new deck and glass verandah that will enhance our already wonderful homestead. Room 2's extension will keep in with the existing covered walkway between both classrooms.

The Board has been mindful to ensure both of these extensions will look great and be able to provide the children and our wonderful teachers with that outdoor play area during our awful Christchurch winters. In total we will add an additional 81m² that can be used as classroom extensions.

During the holiday period we will also be doing some repairs to the main gate, the addition of two new gates from the car park area as well as some changes and repairs to the large playground equipment.

I'm sure most of you have noticed the addition of a great bike stand inside the front gate. This was made by Rob Brown (Room 2 parent). A special thank you to Rob for donating his valuable time and skills.

Emma Godfrey
Property, Board of Trustees



M O N T E S S O R I P R E S C H O O L
V E R A N D A H , C O V E R E D W A L K W A Y A N D D E C K
A D D I T I O N

Marshmallow Test

In the 1960s, a group of four year olds were given a marshmallow and promised another only if they could wait 20 minutes before eating the first one. Some children could wait and others could not. The researchers then followed the progress of each child into adolescence and demonstrated that those with the ability to wait were better adjusted and more dependable (determined via surveys of their parents and teachers), and scored an average of 210 points higher on the Scholastic Aptitude Test years later. Daniel Goleman, a world-renowned expert on EQ (emotional intelligence), indicates that impulse control is a high determinant of emotional intelligence.



Realistic Expectations

Paula Scott

Recently some of our teaching team were fortunate enough to attend the National Early Childhood Conference held here in Christchurch. You may cast your mind back to the Friday when Helen and Debbie manned the decks and many children were abuzz with the news that a male relief teacher played exciting and energetic games of hide and seek with them.

All the while, Shelagh, Danielle and I were attending an array of workshops interspersed with key note speakers. The key note speakers were all inspiring, but none more so for myself than Marcus Akuhata/Brown. Marcus is an educator who has represented New Zealand internationally and within the Commonwealth, mostly focussing on the learning and developmental needs of children at risk and youth offending. His key note speech addressed our expectations of children and was heartfelt and moving.

As a teaching team we have reflected and debated his speech for many hours. I am lead to write this newsletter article not from the perspective of low expectations of our children, but from an aspect that is far more relevant to us here at the Courtyard, the realistic expectations of our children.

In Debbie's article she shares one of the main aspirations from our early childhood curriculum "to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society".

When we ponder the concept of realistic expectations of our child, I personally reflect on how we can support our children to become emotionally happy, autonomous and confident in themselves in all they pursue.

To truly be happy we need to be living a life which meets our own needs, values and beliefs. It is better to live life with intrinsic motivation rather than a life lived to externally please others, often a parent. The catch with living a life to please others is that one will never feel their own dreams have been truly achieved. Shelagh's article covers this concept quite succinctly.

As a parent it is very difficult to negotiate the confused waters of raising a child. We want our children to know that they can reach for the stars and there is no limit to what they can achieve, but we may get a little lost by wanting them to succeed where we may have personally failed, pressing them to fulfil our own hopes and dreams rather than their own.

It's an easy trap to fall into, feeling proud and successful because our child has won a prize, come first or was the best at something can validate us as a parent.

We can get caught up in the importance of formal education as a measure of intelligence. We often think that academic achievement is somehow linked to success as a person. The desire we have for our children to learn to read, write and solve mathematical equations earlier than their age peers can sometimes cause us anxiety as we measure our child's abilities against their peers.

The good news is that we can take a deep breath and relax.

Have faith in the child.

They do have the ability to create themselves. Appreciate your child's own unique attributes and talents, they will be showing them to you every day in every way. Children have so much to contribute to our own beliefs and values, they help us to see what is really important, yet we often discount them.

By following your child's strengths and interests you are better able to observe your child. Trust them to show us what they are really passionate and interested in, for then we will tap into a powerful way to support them in their process of self-creation.

***Every man stamps his value on himself.
Man is made great or small by his own will.***

Friedrich von Schiller 1759-1805



Different Psychological Perspectives

Danielle Graham

Recently the annual Early Childhood Council Conference for 2010 was held in Christchurch and Shelagh, Paula and I were very fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend. The speakers varied in topics and shared some very insightful knowledge with us all.

There were two speakers who I found very informative and provided us all with food for thought. Both these speakers presented a session on guiding children's behaviour, from two very different psychological perspectives; this was very interesting and inspiring.

Professor Matthew Sanders is Professor of Clinical Psychology and Director of the Parenting and Family Support Centre at the University of Queensland Australia. He is considered a world leader in the field of evidence-based parenting and family interventions.

Dr Louise Porter is a child psychologist with 25 years' experience in private practice consulting with parents and practitioners about children's development and social or emotional challenges. She also has experience as a University lecturer, where she addressed topics relating to early childhood, special and gifted education, and behaviour management. Her special interest is in how adults can guide children's behaviour, which is what she based her session at the conference around; this was a very insightful session and really examined our beliefs about how we view children's behaviour and the impact our reactions have on children's practice.

Louise expressed that children are not out there to make our life difficult, rather we just expect too much of them at the young age of 3-5 years old. She suggests that a reasonable duration to expect a child to sit and concentrate for is three minutes x their age in years. She believed that when children are

presenting with challenging behaviours then there will be something surrounding them that is causing the type of behaviour being presented. Her advice was, when trying to change children's behaviour we should look hard at what is causing the behaviour first, before reacting. Louise also addressed that there is no such thing as "attention seeking" types of behaviour and asked that we don't put too much of our own attention on dealing with this type of undesirable behaviour as she believes that if children are presenting with "attention seeking" behaviour then there is a reason for it. Louise Porter believes in the guidance approach, which advocates sensitive child-centred communication. She expresses that children enjoy the negative reaction they sometimes gain from adults when producing undesirable behaviour, therefore in order to teach children how to regulate their emotions simply by not enforcing authority then children cannot contest what does not exist. If you instead provide the emotional support children require to control their own behaviour then you will create less rebellious children. This is no easy task and requires you to avoid providing children with consequences for undesirable behaviour as well refraining from providing positive reinforcements for amiable behaviour.

Professor Matthew Sanders would challenge some of Louise Porter's ideas, as he believes in the approach of using rewards and punishments to guide children's behaviour. He suggests that children need to be able to self regulate, and the more you talk through a situation or indulge inappropriate outbursts, with the emotional security of back rubs and conversations then the more you are prolonging the audience for the child, therefore prolonging the behaviour. In my opinion, Matthew Sanders views children as sponges and they will absorb anything that we offer them. In other words they rely on us as adults to teach them what is acceptable and what is not. If we do not lead by example and demonstrate how to behave, then how can we possibly expect children to do so, as behaviour is not controlled by genes it is controlled by environmental influences. He speaks freely about how reward charts, for example star charts are not just to help remind the child of the correct behaviour but also to prompt the adult to notice the correct behaviour.

These views were very interesting and truly do provide us with food for thought, as well as encouraging us all to reflect on our current practice.



Te Whariki

Debbie Cocks

When you read about a '**disposition**' within your child's learning story or see a quote from "**Te Whariki**" do you wonder where this information comes from?.

Te Whariki is the National bi-cultural curriculum statement for the early childhood sector. It is specifically designed for the education and care of children from birth to school age. The aim is to provide "a basis for consistent high quality curriculum delivery in the diverse range of early childhood services in New Zealand".

The curriculum is founded on the following aspirations for children "to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society". The term curriculum is used in this document "to describe the sum total of the experiences, activities and events, whether direct or indirect which occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development".

The title 'Te Whariki' which is translated 'The Mat', is a metaphor for the weaving together of the Principles, Strands and Goals within the curriculum document. The Montessori philosophy provides a teaching environment that embodies each of the principles and strands within Te Whariki.

The four key principles are:

-  Holistic Development
-  Empowerment
-  Relationships
-  Family and Community

There are five strands that arise from the four principles:

-  Well-being
-  Belonging
-  Contribution
-  Communication
-  Exploration

Each strand has associated goals, which in turn have specific learning outcomes.

In early childhood, holistic, active learning and the total process of learning are emphasised. Knowledge, skills and attitudes are closely linked. These three aspects combine together to form a child's 'working theory' and help the child develop dispositions that encourage learning. Dispositions can be looked upon as 'habits of mind' or 'patterns of learning'. An example of a learning disposition is the disposition to be curious. This may be characterised by an indication to enjoy puzzling over events or the skills to ask questions about them in different ways and an understanding of when is the most appropriate time to ask questions. Some of the learning dispositions that a child may display are – courage, trust, perseverance, confidence, engaging with a challenge, finding an interest, being involved, problem solving, thinking independently. Dispositions are important learning outcomes as they provide a framework for developing working theories.

The philosophy of the Courtyard Montessori is to "aim to awaken the child's spirit by providing a dynamic link between the child and their environment. In order to achieve each child's holistic development to the fullest, there must be a strong, trusting relationship between preschool, child, family/whanau and community". Our philosophy epitomises all of the four principles and five strands of Te Whariki and is observed through our curriculum.

Ministry of Education (1996).
Te Whariki Early Childhood Curriculum
Wellington: Learning Media



Fundraising Report

Bernie McCarthy

Fundraising at the Courtyard is in full flight this term. We have completed the tea towel fundraiser, and this was really successful. There was great feedback as to how much parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends loved them. Thanks goes to Gillian for getting two of them framed and hung in each classroom, they look great. We have raised nearly \$600 which is a great return. If anyone missed out and wants one (or more) please see Gillian as we have spares.

Last week I held a fundraising meeting and thanks to Marcus, Angie, Marjie and Lucretia for coming along. We have lots of helpers and really do appreciate spreading the load.

The Recipe Book is well underway, and a huge thanks goes to all the parents who have emailed me their recipes. My dinner menu has

had a number of new recipes added to it already. For those who still want to send me recipes please email them to me at bernie_mcc@hotmail.com by Friday 28 May. We will have the recipe book completed and off to the printers by the end of the term and hope to have them ready for sale by the start of next term.

We are holding a movie afternoon on Saturday 17 July where we will be showing Peter Pan. More information will follow but I am sure all the children will love to dress up as their favourite character and enjoy this classic.

Fundraising last year was used to purchase the flag pole which the children are getting a lot of enjoyment from and is providing a great learning experience. Thanks to all who are supporting our fundraising efforts, it makes a huge difference.



Jake and Corbin are keen collectors of the Super 14 player's cards currently featuring in the cornflake packets. Even more exciting was finding out that one of the cards featured our very own Crusader Tim Bateman (Dad of Shylah in the afternoon class) in real life. Meeting Tim was a very awe inspiring event for Corbin, in fact so inspiring he couldn't speak! It has however sparked a real interest in rugby and the boys have been very keen to learn what rugby jerseys represent the different provinces in New Zealand. Danielle (a keen sports girl herself) made a lovely resource for all the children to use, which involves matching the different jerseys onto the map of New Zealand.

Both Corbin and Jake worked together to complete this activity to proudly place in our Courtyard Montessori display in the Paper Plus window at Barrington Mall.

Our rabbits Thumper and Pom Pom are voracious eaters.

Any donations of spinach, parsley, carrot tops or dandelions from your garden will be gratefully eaten!



Profile

Damien Straw

My daughter Annemiaka is in Room 2 and has been since late last year. She is enjoying it and getting so much out of it! We were living in Australia until April last year but we are proud Kiwis and very pleased to be back, there's no place like home.

My wife Mariska and I work for ourselves and have two businesses. 'Artefact Limited' deals in gold and silver bullion, vintage watches, estate jewellery and Maori artefacts whilst our other business 'BluTrade' specialises in the sale of Blu Ray disc movies online. Being self employed gives me the ability to arrange my time to be involved on the Board of Trustees and having the responsibility of the Property, I can use that time to help with any odd jobs around the preschool which I am able to do. I am pleased to say that I have done a couple already!

At the first Board Meeting I attended I was instantly impressed with the other Board members and teachers' dedication and I am sure we'll have some good successes with our tasks throughout the year. I am looking forward to having an input and to being involved in projects that will benefit the preschool. One of the things I will be working on is a Maintenance Schedule so that future Boards can have a guide as to when and how to service, paint or check property, equipment and appliances around the preschool.

No doubt there will be a working bee or two through the year to keep the property in good order and I'll be asking for help from any willing parents. If you are interested in helping out with anything or have a particular skill which would help, feel free to contact me at any stage.

In Brief ...

Teachers will be available for interviews at 8.00am, after session on a Friday or after extended/ full day for morning parents and after session at 3.45pm for afternoon parents.

Fire and Earthquake drills are practiced once a term.

You may have noted an additional page added to the front of the Profile Books inviting parents/whanau or caregivers' input into learning stories, interests and experiences.

We are continuing to review our new group time at the beginning of the day at 8.45am and we are pleased to say that from our perspective it is working very well.

As winter approaches and in keeping with our policy, we ask that children who vomit or have diarrhoea be kept home for 24-48 hours. Likewise coughs and throat infections are best kept at home.

Notice of Withdrawal Forms have been sent out to families leaving the preschool at the end of this term, and if you think you might be leaving the preschool for reasons other than attending primary school please see Shelagh.

Fees are charged for the days your child is booked for during the term, inclusive of public holidays and teacher only day.

We are reviewing our civil emergency evacuation policy.

Please read reviewed policies by the sign in sheets and add any comments that you feel might be relevant. If you are happy with review or you have added comments please add your signature.

Please do not park on the triangle sign on the road between the staff car park and our neighbour's drive. It is both illegal and dangerous to do so.

From 1 July 2010, 5 years olds are eligible for 20 Hours ECE Funding.

