

# Te Manu Hou

Quarterly Newsletter of New Zealand Kindergartens Inc  
No 6 • September 2001

## Sally Kennedy, new President of New Zealand Kindergartens Inc.

When I wrote an article for the March issue of Te Manu Hou, I had little idea that I would be the next President of New Zealand Kindergartens Inc. I am delighted, however, to take on this challenge. I would like to extend my appreciation and thanks to the previous President - Averil Stevenson (now Robertson – congratulations!). I would also like to thank Sharon Walch who stood down from the Board at the AGM in June. Both Averil and Sharon held office during a transitional period for the national office and together they undertook many of the tasks that are usually performed by national office personnel. It was an enormous commitment and they will long be remembered for their dedication and skill in shaping the direction of the Board. I am pleased to say that Sharon's corporate knowledge will not be lost, as she remains immersed within kindergarten in her role as General Manager of the Napier Kindergarten Association. Thank you Averil and Sharon. I am delighted that members of NZKI voted at the recent AGM to bestow Life Membership of New Zealand Kindergartens on Averil and Sharon – congratulations.

It stands to reason that with two members leaving the Board that we welcome two new members. Phil Wylie, President, Nelson District FKA and Sherryl Wilson, Chief Executive, Kidsfirst Kindergartens (Canterbury Westland KA) took up the challenge in June. They join me, Sally Kennedy; Michael Meadowcroft; Karen Boyes; Richard Tattersfield and Val McCullum. It is always good to have an injection of new members into a team. It ensures new ideas, vision and energy are brought to the table.

Much has happened in the early childhood education sector in the last 18 months. It is imperative that we as an organisation have a strong and respected voice to speak on behalf of our members. The next year in particular will be a busy one for us. Our focus strategically is to be pro-active and seek to bring new initiatives to the fore, to raise awareness of the importance of quality education for our children and to work collaboratively with other organisations to achieve this. The overriding importance is that children have a voice nationally. We must be able to answer in the affirmative to the question "is this good for the children"? 2002 is election year. We need to be very sure of our message to all political parties. Early childhood education is not a political football. There have been times in the past where we have been treated with disdain and we have not been adequately consulted. Our message is clear. We are a vitally important part of the education sector and we are a voice that demands and deserves to be heard. My children, your children, our children – we are their champions!

### Editorial policy statement:

The views expressed in this publication are those of the contributors. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of New Zealand Kindergartens Inc. (...likewise the grammar).



Sally Kennedy

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## Observation: Contributions from NZKI Board members

*Sherryll Wilson, Chief Executive, Kidsfirst Kindergartens, Canterbury Westland Free Kindergarten Association Inc.*

The release, in mid August, of the consultation document for the Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education, marked a significant moment for our sector, not simply because of the direction and content of the document, but also because of the opportunity it presents.

The aim of the working group in releasing this document, as part of the development of a 10 Year Strategic Plan, is to gain feedback from everyone with an interest in early childhood education. By studying the document and becoming involved in the process, members of our organisation, at all levels and from across the country, have a unique opportunity to help shape the future for early childhood education.

The kindergarten sector with its long history in New Zealand, has always taken the lead in the development of quality education - education that meets the highest standards of the national curriculum. With the establishment of a 10-year national strategy, expected to be adopted by the Government by 2002, the maintenance of this role is more important than ever.

The current process is an opportunity for us as an organisation to consider the broader implications of a plan for the future. In doing so, we should look not only at how we can help build a national framework for the entire sector, but also what standards our kindergarten sector can attain within it.

Rather than focussing solely on the requirements of the strategy, we should seek to set our own quality benchmarks for the provision of early childhood education. It is a chance for our organisation to set its own goals and standards, at a level that can lead and inspire the wider early childhood education sector as we have done in the past.

By taking responsibility for assessing and maintaining the highest educational standards and constantly looking at ways in which to best meet the needs of New Zealand children, their families and whanau, we will guarantee a strong future for the kindergarten sector. Only by taking the opportunity that is presented to us now can we ensure that kindergarten will remain at the forefront of developments for the early childhood education sector. How we do so, how we make our voice heard and how it is received, represents a further challenge for us as an organisation.

In the past, we have been unable to present a united viewpoint from every kindergarten association in the country. This inability undermines our capacity to give a clear and strong message to the Government on our vision for early childhood education. I believe that time has come to set asides any differences we may have and work together to create a new future for our particular sector and the early childhood sector as a whole. By taking these steps now, we have the greatest chance of securing real and permanent improvements to ensure the best possible education for New Zealand's children in the years to come.

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## Story Grans

*Wendy Logan*

*Executive Officer, Nelson District Kindergarten Association*

Over 50 Story Grans donate an hour of their time each week, to read to children at the 13 kindergartens in the Nelson District.

This concept was born from a comment by the then Minister of Education, Nick Smith, who said he'd love to have grandparents reading in schools. Pat Wilson, who is now the Story Gran Co-ordinator, heard the comment and thought, as I was her neighbour and the manager of the Nelson Kindergarten Association, she would try the idea out on me.

We then met with a small group of teachers and formulated the ground rules for the programme. Helen Durbridge, Head Teacher at Tahunanui Kindergarten, developed a short training session and information

sheets on "Early Literacy Skills" and "Ways Adults Can Help".

The programme has now been established for two years, with a steady stream of new volunteers that Pat and the Soroptimist Club of Motueka find through word of mouth, talking to groups and free promotion in community news.

Margaret Bartlett, the Association Secretary, ensures all the Story Grans consent to and pass a conviction disclosure process, prior to being introduced to a kindergarten. There is always lots of laughter as all the Story Grans share their experiences at an afternoon tea that is held twice a year where Story Grans are advised of kindergarten policies, how to keep themselves safe and how to promote early literacy skills.

The programme is not essential but "a bonus". This means, if the Gran cannot come, all they need to do is ring and apologise, as the children look forward to their regular Story Grans, especially the ones that dress up, take pictures and bring their pets.

A number of our Story Grans are in their 80's and range to a much younger age. The group has attracted a number of retired teachers from all sectors of education. We would like to encourage more male Story Grans, as at present we only have three. One Story Gran said "I'll stay with the programme while my hearing and eyesight is up to it".

Each kindergarten has around four Story Grans. All the teachers are very enthusiastic about the programme and comment that children benefit from the one to one

or small group reading. Many children blossom under the programme.

Other side benefits from the programme include providing the children with an older age group to interact with. Story Grans often donate to fundraisers and promote great word of mouth in the community about the wonderful work kindergarten does.

This programme has proved to be a win-win situation where the children, teachers and Story Grans all greatly benefit from interacting with each other.

If you are interested in implementing the Story Gran programme, contact the Nelson Kindergarten Association and we will make available our information on how to set up and run this valuable programme.

## Kidsafe Week - 2001 Aiming to keep our kids safe

Two issues close to the hearts of most preschoolers' parents are the focus of Kidsafe Week 2001 (October 12 - 19). Poisons prevention and keeping kids safe in the car are the two themes for the sixth annual national child safety week.

More than 500 preschoolers are admitted to hospitals across the country after being poisoned, say Kidsafe Week organisers, and nearly 10,500 calls are made to the National Poisons Centre in Dunedin after a suspected or confirmed poisoning. Children most at risk are those aged between 2 and 4 years and the major culprits involved in poisonings are everyday substances like medicines, cosmetics, household cleaners and chemicals, as well as items like garden sprays. However, Dr Wayne Temple of the National Poisons Centre says families can keep their kids safe by following a few simple rules.

These include:

- storing cleaners and chemicals in their original containers. Never store them in drink bottles,
- keeping chemicals locked away,
- keeping cleaners out of reach and sight of small children,
- returning medicines to their usual safe storage place immediately after use, and
- asking the pharmacist for child resistant caps on medicines.

Dr Temple says while safety caps are not child proof, they do limit a child's access to medicines. Evidence shows that since the introduction of child resistant caps on children's liquid paracetamol in 1997, poisonings from this medication have dropped 71%. During Kidsafe Week the National Poisons Centre along

with the other agencies that develop and run Kidsafe Week; Safekids, the Ministry of Health, ACC, the Land Transport Safety Authority, NZ Police, Plunket, Age Concern and Te Puni Kokiri, will lobby to have more medicines dispensed with safety caps.

Kidsafe Week organisers are also planning events and promotions to increase the correct use of child car restraints - infant and child seats, boosters and safety belts. A number of Kidsafe Week coalitions will run car seat clinics during the Week as a way of showing people how to install and use the seats correctly. A recent pilot study by the Injury Prevention Unit in Dunedin found that while virtually all parents buckled their children in, more than 60% were not using car restraints correctly, or had not installed them properly.

The car seat clinics aim to address many of the questions, and concerns families have about using car restraints correctly. People can find out just where clinics are being held by visiting the Kidsafe Week website; [www.kidsafe.org.nz](http://www.kidsafe.org.nz).

Sue Kendall from Safekids says there are a few things families should remember when using seats:

- infants travel in a rear facing car seat until they reach 9kg. Some seats allow older children (up to 1 year) to also sit in rear facing seats, and this a very safe option.
- An infant car seat should never be placed in the front passenger seat if there is an airbag there.
- The safest place for a child restraint is in the middle rear seat of the car, where it is furthest from the sides of the vehicle.

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- By law children under five years must be in an approved child restraint.
- Children from 5 to 7 years should travel in an approved seat, but if this is not available, they can use an adult safety belt.
- The safest place for all children when traveling in the car is the back seat.

Further information on using car restraints will be available in pamphlets distributed by Kidsafe Week coalitions during the week. Anyone wanting these should talk to his or her local branch of Plunket.

## Anne Tolley, MP Opposition Spokesperson Early childhood education

On a recent visit to Britain I met with a number of organisations, policy makers and teachers involved in early childhood education.

I was pleased to hear plenty of praise for New Zealand's Te Whāriki everywhere I went, everyone from the Department of Education officials to parents. Our curriculum framework is widely envied and admired.

Britain has set new policies and made considerable financial commitment to early childhood education and an established set of learning goals as part of the "foundation stage" for ages 3 to 5 years.

I met with a group of Nursery School Head Teachers from all over England. The nursery schools are perhaps the closest equivalent to our kindergartens. It was interesting to hear some of the same concerns expressed by them as I have heard frequently expressed in kindergartens all over New Zealand, and I asked them what they thought I should focus on in my policy development work at home. The two main messages were:

- Increase standards for teachers
- Avoid pushing children into formal learning too soon.

I was particularly interested in the English "reception year". This can be the first year in primary school at 5 to 6 years. British education policy now requires that year to be based on the "foundation stage" goals, rather than the primary curriculum.

This is something I am keen to put more thought into and I would welcome views and comment on the application of this concept in New Zealand early childhood education.

I can be contacted at Parliament Buildings, Wellington, or emailed at [anne.tolley@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:anne.tolley@parliament.govt.nz)

## Draft Strategic Plan for ECE: Consultation Document

*Merren Dobson, National Advocate, NZKI*

The Strategic Plan for early childhood education (ECE) is now available, in its draft form, for consultation. It is a draft 10-year plan for early childhood education policy. Following the current, month-long consultation process the final proposal document will be presented to the Minister of Education, Hon. Trevor Mallard.

Comments on the draft plan are urgently sought from the early childhood education community. The full copy of the plan is available on the Ministry of Education's Website – [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz) on the Early Childhood homepage. A questionnaire is also available from this address to assist you with your feedback comments. You are welcome to use the questions or else write your own response. The dates and venues for regional community consultation meetings are also listed at this website address. All are welcome to attend. The contact address for responses is [speci.info@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:speci.info@minedu.govt.nz) and the closing date for feedback is **21 September 2001**.

A revised plan will then be presented to the Minister in early October 2001 and Government will announce its decisions in 2002.

The working group's recommended goals for early childhood education are summarised as follows:

- high levels of participation across all communities
- equitable access to quality services
- a required curriculum
- registered teachers in all services
- improved ratios and group size
- more qualified early childhood teachers
- quality services provided by parents and whanau
- ongoing improvements in services
- access to appropriate professional development
- skilled leadership
- a policy to support languages
- showcasing excellence
- affordable services; a vision of free entitlement
- ongoing advice and support
- removing barriers to new, quality services
- supporting families
- continuity in education
- New Zealand early childhood research programme

The opportunity is there for you to contribute.

## 25 Years of Mobile Kindergarten

Sally Kennedy, President, NZKI

In November 1971 the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education released its report (often referred to as the 'Hill Report'). The Committee concluded that there were definite inequalities of service then provided. Amongst those regarded as having special educational needs or being *"in particular need of pre-school education"* were children designated as *"isolated"*. One of the suggestions of the 'Hill Report' was the *"development of a mobile pre-school service in suitable rural areas"* (p103) The 'Hill Report' also stated that *"all children should have the opportunity for pre-school education"*.

The first rural mobile pre-school unit in New Zealand began operating in the Marlborough area in 1976. The considered success of the Marlborough Mobile Kindergarten led to budget approval for the setting up of additional units in 1979.

Much has happened to Mobile Kindergartens over the years. Some have closed and those that are still operating do so at a cost to the communities they serve as well as communities around them. It is interesting to note that some of the issues raised in the 'Hill Report' 30 years ago are still issues today.

Mobile Kindergartens provide isolated communities with a much-needed service. Unfortunately, the cost of running a mobile kindergarten is far in excess of the Government's "grant in aid", a.k.a. bulk funding. Whilst the great majority of kindergarten associations have prospered under bulk funding, those associations operating Mobile Kindergartens have faced difficult financial decisions. The advent of bulk funding for kindergartens posed a funding problem for Mobile Kindergartens. What funding formula was to be used in a service where child numbers varied greatly from venue to venue? Traditionally kindergartens are funded on a per child per hour basis. The answer was the "notional roll". Mobile Kindergartens would be funded for 20 children regardless of how many actually attended. This sounds fairly generous but the reality is that funding 20 children does not even cover the salary costs of two trained teachers, let alone any of the other costs associated with the Mobile service. It is

very easy to see the funding shortfall in the following figures provided by the Marlborough Association. All figures are exclusive of GST.

Bulk funding	\$59,904
Teachers' salaries	\$71,198

An obvious shortfall already! Add to that the costs of maintenance of the van, provision for replacing the van, ACC, Professional Development - the list goes on, and the shortfall increases. This year the predicted shortfall for the Marlborough Kindergarten Association is **\$29,688.00**. Where does this money come from? Well, it comes directly from the bulk funding generated by the six other kindergartens within the Association.

Teachers who work on Mobile Kindergartens accept working conditions far different from their urban counterparts. Many venues are less than exciting, but the children of each district benefit enormously from their interaction with qualified teachers.

If we forget about the funding of individual kindergartens and go back to the child, after all it is the child that is the all important

factor here, why is Joe Bloggs Junior who lives in Linkwater worth less than Jim Bloggs Junior who lives in Blenheim? Joe Junior will attend the Mobile Kindergarten once a week from the age of 2 – until he goes to school at 5. Using the current funding rates, the Government will pay \$1,068.00 (inclusive of GST) to the Marlborough Association to educate Joe. Depending on the kindergarten Jim attends (there is a choice of service, numbers of hours etc), the Government will pay the Marlborough Association between \$3,000 and \$5,696 to educate Jim over a 2-year period.

Why are rural children less valued than their urban cousins? There is no simple answer to the provision of services to isolated communities. However, this government says it is committed to raising the participation level of children in early childhood education. The equity funding formula may help but we have yet to see any provision in that funding for Mobile Kindergartens. The demographics are changing rapidly and Mobile Kindergartens, when financially viable, are an excellent way to take education to isolated, rural communities.





## Kindergarten & Section 59 of the Crimes Act

*Eileen Woodhead*

*Professional Services Manager, Napier Kindergarten Association*

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child says that children must be protected from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for their care. New Zealand, as a party to this convention currently has legislation that, it could be argued, directly contradicts Article 19.

Early in 1997 United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child completed a review of reports made by both Government and non-government agencies in regard to New Zealand's compliance with the Convention. It recommended that New Zealand review legislation about physical punishment of children within the family in order to effectively ban all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse.

Section 59 of Crimes Act 1961 provides parents with protection when they use reasonable force in disciplining their children. This exception to the law in regard to assault sets children apart from other people in society who are given legal protection from any form of physical assault. Reasonable force is not clearly defined in the law and judges have varied their interpretation of the amount of force, which can be regarded as reasonable. Children in New Zealand were given protection from corporal punishment in schools in 1990. To my knowledge throughout the history of the kindergarten movement smacking has never been acceptable. It is important to observe that the law change which supports this (i.e. ECC Regulations) came after the kindergarten philosophy was firmly established.

Currently the government is seeking advice from the Social Policy Agency and is considering some change to the law that will send a leadership signal to NZ parents that there are better ways to discipline their children than using force. There is no intention to make criminals out of ordinary parents.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes the word 'discipline' as coming from the Old English word 'disciple' to guide or lead by example and means to develop an understanding of the rules to provide 'mental or moral training' It does not mean to smack or hit. From Monday to Friday – tens of thousands of energetic and playful kindergarten children are positively managed by trained teachers with absolutely no smacking. Why not celebrate this achievement?

Are we not in a very strong position to model and

promote the no smacking message to our wider communities? It may not be appropriate for kindergartens to take a public stand on the Section 59 debate, however, a huge amount can be done to alter the views of parents at the grass roots level. In turn this will engender courage in our politicians to proactively address the issue of leaving Section 59 as it stands.

**The following are some references if you wish further information on this topic:**

Ansley, B (Spare the Rod) 2001 New Zealand Listener, May 5th, 19-22

Advocating for children: International perspectives on children's rights

Edited by Smith, A Gollop, M, Marshall, K & Nairn, K

EPOCH, NZ Children are Unbeatable Ways to Avoid Smacking – A Resource kit for parents and Caregivers-

EPOCH website: <http://epochnz.virtualave.net>

Donnelly, B (2001) Dialogue: Call it thrashing and see why it is bad law. New Zealand Herald Online, Friday May 11

Freeman, M. (1999) Children are unbeatable. Children and Society, 13, 130-141

Simcock, A Preventing Physical Abuse to children, Playcentre Journal issue 110 Autumn 2001

### Congratulations:

The box of chocolates for the first article received for this edition goes to Wendy Logan for her article on Story Grans.

Please remember – we invite NZKI members of parent committees, teachers, Senior Teachers, Presidents and Managers to send articles to the national office of NZKI for possible inclusion in Te Manu Hou. The articles need to be supplied by email, in Word format, Arial font, and approximately 500 words.

## OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand

### NZKI is a member of OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand. Who or what is OMEP?

*Lyn Foote, National President*

*OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand*

OMEP (L'Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Préscolaire or World Organisation for Early Childhood Education) is an international organisation concerned with advocacy for young children and their families. The aim of OMEP is to promote the optimum conditions for all children, in order to ensure their wellbeing, development and happiness, both within their family unit and the wider communities in which they live. There are OMEP organisations in 68 countries. An increasing number of early childhood teachers, parents and professionals from health and social service agencies, who are interested in the education and welfare of young children in Aotearoa/New Zealand, have become members of OMEP.

Within a country there are "chapter groups". Here in New Zealand there are chapters in Auckland, Hamilton, Napier, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill. Each of these groups actively responds to issues within their own community as well as addressing broader national and international concerns consistent with the aims of the international organisation.

The focus of local OMEP chapters generally reflects the key concerns of the particular community. A key focus of several chapters of OMEP has been to support the appointment of a child advocate on city councils. This is to ensure that the interests of children are considered in local council policies and decisions.

Nationally OMEP has had a strong focus on peace and children's rights. Local chapters have participated in community activities that have promoted these issues.

OMEP keeps a watchful eye on the policy of Government to ensure that it will lead to quality programmes and services for children. The members of OMEP are committed to ensuring that all children have every opportunity to learn and develop.

The international focus of OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand has included links with OMEP groups in other countries. Recently, Auckland chapter hosted a group of OMEP members from Japan. The Wellington Chapter has had links with OMEP members from China. OMEP also has had an involvement in an Indonesian story telling project. Two of our members have just returned from the World Assembly of OMEP

in Chile. At this Assembly the member countries passed the following resolution that will be the focus of all OMEP countries for the next three years.

It is resolved that OMEP, as a worldwide organisation working for the rights of all young children to high quality education and care, encourage members, individually and through their national committees, their professional colleagues, the families they work with and their governments to:

provide high quality education and care for all young children in environments promoting peace and respect for each other and their environments by:

- supporting high quality education and care for all children in their homes, childcare facilities, schools, and communities,
- supporting families and promoting healthy family relationships and positive parenting skills,
- teaching children to respect and protect each other and their environments,
- supporting children in transition in all their settings, and
- protecting children from exploitation, violence, and discrimination in the home, childcare facilities, schools, media and community.

Each of our Chapters will respond to this resolution in a way that reflects the priorities of their community.

Membership of OMEP is open to anyone interested in promoting the wellbeing of children. Enquiries regarding membership can be made through the National Secretary, Fiona Ellis, c/- Dunedin College of Education, Private Bag, Dunedin.

TE MANU HOU ADVERTISING RATES	
Full page	\$150.00
Half page	\$75.00
Quarter page	\$40.00
Less than quarter page	\$30.00

## Wilkinson Insurance Brokers (Wgtn) Ltd

### Personal accident & illness insurance

In the middle of the year, with plenty of flu bugs going around, it seems an opportune time to raise the issue of protecting your income against loss as a result of ill health or accident.

Many people consider that, as employees, they have no real need for their own personal accident and illness insurance cover, that it is an insurance cover only beneficial to the self-employed. They consider that the sick leave entitlement provided by their employer will be adequate in the event of illness or accident. But what if your leave entitlement is only one month, and you are off for six months. How will you manage? Will you rely on savings to pay the mortgage, household costs, school fees, and medical costs (if disability is due to sickness)? Many more of us now carry medical insurance because we are aware of those costs as we hear more horror stories through the media all the time. However, what we do not hear so often is the hardship that many homes endure as a result of a wage earner no longer being able to earn. What if your medical practitioner fails to diagnose a serious problem, and by the time the diagnosis is made, it is too late to allow you ever to return to your own vocation.

Whether we want to or not these issues must be considered, and in doing so, we can then consider the

option of an insurance product to protect your most important asset – your income.

We have an insurance policy available to you, which can give you protection for 1-3 years (you select the period of cover), and with an excess period of no less than 7 days, or up to what ever you choose. If you have leave entitlements from your employer, you will probably choose an excess period that equates to the amount of sick leave to which you are entitled. This will significantly reduce your premium.

Examples of the cost of this insurance, based on a weekly benefit of \$500 payable for 2 years, and a lump sum payment of \$50,000 following death or total permanent disability, are:

Excess - 7 days      Annual Premium - \$575

Excess - 28 days      Annual Premium - \$400

Premium payments can be made by monthly instalment, although this will affect the annual cost of the insurance. Remember: This benefit is paid irrespective of whether you receive ACC, also ACC only pays for accidental injury and only pays a % of your current salary. If you would like more information on this insurance, please contact either Cindy or Julie, on Ph 0800 966 6666.



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Cindy Elrick [cindy@wibco.co.nz](mailto:cindy@wibco.co.nz) or Julie Shanley [julie@wibco.co.nz](mailto:julie@wibco.co.nz)