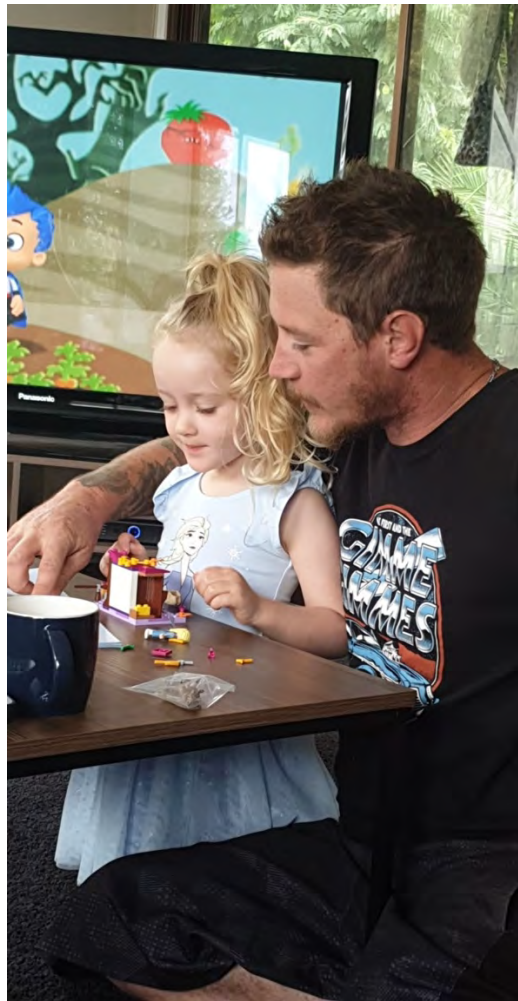


Early Education



Volume 66 *Spring / Summer 2020*

- Teacher Led Innovation Round 3
- Teacher Led Innovation Round 4
- Peer learning in ECE
- Privatisation in ECE
- Children, families in prison and ECE practice
- Reflexes and support early learning



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Contributions

Contributions of articles and photos are welcome from the early childhood community.

Early Education welcomes:

- Innovative practice papers with a maximum of 3,500 words, plus an abstract or professional summary of 150 words and up to five keywords.
- Research informed papers with a maximum of 3,500 words, plus an abstract or professional summary of 150 words, and up to five keywords.
- Think pieces with a maximum of 1500 words.
- Commentaries on management matters with a maximum of 1500 words.
- Book or resource reviews with a maximum of 1000 words.

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Editorial

Claire McLachlan

Kia ora koutou katoa

What an extraordinary year this has been! I am writing this message from Ballarat in Victoria, Australia, where we have spent much of the year in either Stage 4 or Stage 3 lockdown, while the numbers of cases of COVID-19 soared in Melbourne. At the peak, in the middle of the year, we heard news of over 700 new cases and many deaths per day, which was quite scary and incredibly sad. Now, as I write this in December, both New Zealand and Victoria have zero cases of community transmission, with the rest of Australia showing similar patterns. Let us hope that this pattern continues and that a travel bubble between NZ and Australia opens soon, so I can visit my mother, children and grandchildren, including my newest grandchild, Bodhi, whom I have not yet met!

The collection in this volume is also extraordinary in its own way. Because of my own involvement with the Teacher Led Innovation Fund (TLIF) Panel, before I moved to Australia to my new role as Dean of Education at Federation University Australia, I knew there was opportunity to share the really valuable work that teams of teachers and their critical friends had been undertaking across the country. I therefore invited some of the teams to include their work in this volume.

First, this volume includes a collection of the inquiries that were undertaken in the TLIF Round 3, which was the first round in which early childhood settings were eligible to apply for this fund. I was the monitor for these projects, so got to know them as they travelled through their inquiry. This collection includes work from the A'oga Fa'a Samoa in Ponsonby, Auckland, led by Jan Tauoma, who investigated how to support Samoan language development in an immersion setting using digital technologies. This is yet another innovative and useful piece of research to add to our ECE collection on immersion settings. We also have an account of the inquiry from Northcote Baptist in Auckland, who investigated the relationship between digital fluency and intentional teaching in collaboration with Ann Hatherly from CORE Education, who has a long history of supporting innovative and interesting developments in ECE. We have also have two reports

of inquiries on the theme of assessment in ECE in this volume. The first from a collaboration between Greenhithe and Oranga kindergartens in the Auckland Kindergarten Association and the second from a collaboration in Rotorua between the teams at the Ole School House Early Education Centre and staff at Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology. Although the inquiries had different foci—with Greenhithe and Oranga focussing on the role of assessment in assisting a smooth transition to school and the Ole School House focussing on the use of tri-assessment to support both children's and whānau voices to be heard in the assessment system—both inquiries showed that there are alternatives that might be considered in relation to ECE assessment and an important role for whānau to play in determining what is important in terms of assessment in ECE. Finally, there is also an interesting report from Nelson Central School, led by Tracy Watkin, which examined the notion of the use of the Boxall Profile from NurtureUK as a way of assessing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the junior primary school in order to promote strategies to support children's learning.

The second set of TLIF reports comes from Ruahine Kindergarten Association, who were funded in TLIF Round 4. In this collection, we first have an overview of the Data-Knowledge-Action project that framed the inquiry, written by Lynda Hunt. Lynda is a long serving teacher with the Ruahine Kindergarten Association, and she worked in collaboration with the teaching teams in four kindergartens and with the critical friends of Tara McLaughlin, Sue Cherrington, Karyn Aspden and me. Lynda had previously worked with us to pilot the methods used in this project, so she was an expert teacher researcher by the time we started the TLIF funded project. The second article in this group is written by Sue Cherrington, Gaylyn Campbell, Robyn Vine-Adie and Tara McLaughlin. They discuss the importance of having "critical friends" in the TLIF projects which are reported here. As they explain, while many teaching teams are capable of undertaking teacher inquiries very successfully, the complex nature and multiple demands of their work in ECE settings means that teams are more likely to be successful when external supports are offered by the organisational leadership and critical friends are built into the inquiry process

from the beginning. Next, we have the summaries from the four Ruahine kindergartens that participated in the TLIF funded project. Each teaching team has written a summary of what they did as their part of the inquiry and how the inquiry has helped them to use a range of data collection tools, rethink how they view children's learning and consider which types of data are valuable to collect in order to provide support for learning. There are some valuable suggestions on how some of the data collection strategies could be adopted by other teachers.

We also have some interesting other contributions to this volume. Amongst them, Penny Smith provides us with some insights from her doctoral study on peer learning in early childhood settings. As Penny concludes, although teachers were consciously supporting children to learn through interactions with their peers, there were some intriguing contradictions between teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to their role in supporting peer learning. Still on the theme of the importance of teachers' roles in children's learning, Caitlin Neuwelt Kearns and Jenny Ritchie provide us with a thought-provoking piece on the effects of privatisation on quality in early childhood settings. They argue for stricter regulation—such as a requirement that all teaching staff are registered, qualified teachers—and the bolstering of diverse, community-based models of ECCE by implementing higher funding bands for not-for-profit services. Living as I am in Australia, I can't help reflecting on how far ahead New Zealand is than Australia in this particular space!

Reporting on the findings of her Margaret M Blackwell travel scholarship, Charlotte Robinson, from the Auckland Kindergarten Association, delivers an interesting piece on the roles and responsibilities of early childhood teachers who have children in their services who have family in prison. Charlotte's scholarship funded tour identified a number of useful ways in which teachers of young children can support children and their families in sometimes challenging circumstances. She provides some useful suggestions for practice. Continuing on the theme of challenges for children, Leanne Senolili from Manukau Institute of Technology has written a very interesting piece on the issue of retained reflexes in young children, with some helpful ideas of things for teachers to look out for. I recently examined a PhD on this topic by Tessa Grigg, completed at the University of Canterbury, and I am intrigued by the idea that teachers can support children, who haven't naturally lost these early reflexes, to lose them through a range of simple exercises, resulting in improvements in a range of developmental domains. Something for us to think about when we have children who cannot concentrate and cannot stop wriggling!

Finally, we have a couple of book reviews, which may inspire your summer reading. Our former Editor of Early Education, Sue Stover, has been reading the 3rd edition of Helen May's fascinating book *Politics in the playground* in her 'retirement'. If you haven't encountered this book on your journey through early childhood, you should seek this one out. As Sue explains, there is a difficult and complex history of early childhood in New Zealand that is reported in this book and although there are always things we would like more insights on, perhaps these will need to be in memoirs at a later date. Definitely worthy of a space on your bookshelf!

For those who are working with and/or deeply interested in the care and education of infants and toddlers, my co-editor, Karyn Aspden, has provided a useful review of the new text by Julie Brierly on *Working with two-year olds*. Karyn concludes that although this is a UK text and based on the Foundation Stage curriculum, there are strong reminders of just how capable and competent two-year-olds are, and the importance of kaiako with specialised pedagogical knowledge in supporting both the learning and socio-emotional competence of our youngest children in ECE settings.

I hope that you enjoy this volume of *Early Education*, which has been such a pleasure to collate. I am really delighted that we can share some of the excellent work arising from the Teacher Led Innovation Fund (TLIF) and I am really grateful that the Ministry of Education saw the wisdom of extending this funding pool to the ECE sector.

I am also pleased that we seem to have successfully made the transition for *Early Education* from a subscription-based paper copy journal, with an online PDF, to a free, fully accessible online, open access journal. I need to express my thanks to the wonderful Margaret Drummond in the Wilf Malcolm Institute for Educational Research (WMIER) who readies all the articles for publication and then publishes the journal on the website, amidst a range of problem solving. I also need to thank Karyn Aspden, my co-editor and friend, who has coordinated the peer reviewing of this volume.

Very best wishes for a wonderful Christmas and hopefully a much more normal year in 2021. Remember that we are always looking for contributions for the journal, so please contact me if you would like some more information about submitting some interesting that you have been working on.

Ngā manaakitanga

Claire McLachlan

Editor, *Early Education*