

The James St Preschool
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The James St Junior School
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July/August 2008



Here we are hopefully nearing the end of winter. The next few months are going to be particularly busy for The James St Preschool & Junior School. During the last

week of August we will be reviewed by the Education Review Office (ERO) as part of the normal three yearly cycle of reviews. The review office will be on site from 27th August for 3 - 6 days. After this it takes a few weeks for them to complete a report on the quality of Education and Care at the preschools. We hope to be able to include this report in our November newsletter. ERO reports also provide recommendations for further development over the next three years. While our last ERO report commented positively about our staff appraisal system ,

"The management has implemented a comprehensive staff appraisal process. It links each staff member's training and development to centre, professional and personal goals. Staff report progress on achieving these goals against improved learning outcomes for children. Staff and management are committed to improving the quality of the curriculum for children" , it also noted that

"The licensee and manager have yet to establish formal appraisal procedures to monitor their performance."

This basically means ERO want to see Tonia (Licensee) and Murray (manager) being formally appraised as well. There are two parts to this recommendation. Firstly, part of Tonia's role is to relieve for the teaching staff in the event of sickness and holidays. Since 2007 Tonia has undertaken formal appraisal as a teacher. This involves working alongside a supervising teacher within the preschool (as our entire staff do). Also Tonia will be formally appraised by a centre supervisor/head teacher from another preschool/kindergarten every three years as part of renewing her teacher practicing certificate. Secondly both Tonia and Murray will be formally appraised during July each year by our parent community. The 2008 appraisal survey is available at the sign in desks at both preschools. All completed surveys returned by 31st July 2008 will go in the draw to win a \$200 credit to your preschool account.

2008 ELECTION:

We are now four months away from the next election. It is not surprising that Early Childhood Education (ECE) will feature highly on the political radar again. You will no doubt remember the debate that occurred between the Labour and National parties last election particularly regarding Labour's "20 Hours Free" versus Nationals "\$5000 tax rebate". National have released their 2008 ECE policy and it appears the debate this election will not be whether or not we have 20 hours free but how 20 hours free will be delivered. Below we have included a brief summary of Nationals ECE policy. We have also compared this to what the current policy is and how it would impact on the James St Preschool. As soon as Labour and the other parties announce their 2008 ECE policy we will provide a full summary and comparison in later newsletters.

National says they will support parents by improving the choice and quality of early childhood care and education.

1. National will keep 20 Hours free and maintain existing subsidies and fee controls, however they will remove the term Free and instead call it 20 Hours ECE.

We read this that optional charges will remain as they are i.e. preschools can charge optional charges for education and care that is provided at a level above the minimum regulatory standard. However parents must be informed that these charges are optional. 20 Hours Free ECE is working well at The James St Preschool. Parents overwhelmingly have said they would rather pay the \$2 optional charge than see any reduction in the quality of Education and Care provided. We don't see much change here at all.

2. National will make the free ECE scheme more flexible by removing the 6-hours-a-day limit, including playcenters and kohanga reo in the scheme and allowing 5 year olds to access the scheme.

Removal of the 6-hours-a-day limit would be significant for many of our families. As at 1st July 2008 we had 83 children accessing free ECE, of these 31 children were not receiving their full entitlement of 20 hours because they attended for more than six hours on some of their days. The James St Preschool strongly supports the removal of the 6-hours-a-day limit. The Ministry of Education has also been monitoring how many children are not receiving their full entitlement of 20 hours because of the 6-hours-a-day limit.

3. National will increase the adult/child ratio for children under two from 1:5 to 1:4.

The James St Preschool already meets this standard and aims to maintain a ratio of 1:3 in our nursery. We do not believe there would be many preschools running their nursery's at ratio's of 1:5.

4. National will require that after 2012 sessions for the under twos in teacher-led centres are staffed by at least 50% qualified teachers.

Current policy is that after 2012, 100% of all teachers in teacher-led centres are qualified teachers. The James St Preschool & Junior School have met the 100% target since February 2007. It is our intention to maintain 100% qualified teachers in all areas, regardless of government policy. Both feedback from our parent community and the vast body of educational research supports this.

5. National will drop the requirement for early childhood centres with more than 50 children to have more than one licence.

This would be a huge help to The James St Preschool. The James St Preschool and The James St Junior School are currently separately licenced by the Ministry of Education. Many of you will be very familiar with having to re-enrol your child as they transition from the Nursery to Junior School and again when they transition from Junior School to Preschool. If we could operate on one licence we would have far greater flexibility in filling child spaces, transitioning children and staffing.

So in summary the political debate surrounding ECE in 2008 looks set to be based more around delivery and practices than philosophy. The most contentious aspect of National's policy is likely to be the watering down of the qualified teacher targets for under twos. We look forward to following the debate as the other parties release their policies.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW FAMILIES:

Greer Bettridge Alana Cooke
Veda Difulvio Henry Forgie
Charlie Hamilton Grace Hamilton
Jasmine McCoy Karina McLaren
James Moss

FARWELL TO:

Quinn Fatani Riley Matla
Eliza Morritt Finlay Sharpe
Isaac Warnock

THANK YOU:

The Hille family who donated a push chair and ironing board for the preschool family corner.
The Wirtenberger family who donated an angel fish and four bottom crawlers to the preschool fish tank.
Mark Timmermans for offering to play the didgeridoo to the nursery children for their focus.

STAFF:



Jess Teale will be finishing on 18th July. Jess has only been with us for a short time, but has decided to take up an administrative position with Select Education. Select Education provides relieving staff to Early Childhood Centres. Jess hopes to travel

in the near future and we wish well and thank her for the work she has done with the 3 - 3 ½ year olds over the last six months.

Sarah Wolfe will be taking over the 3 - 3 ½ year olds from 4th August. Most of you will know Sarah from Junior School. Sarah has performed an outstanding job in her time at Junior School and has decided she is ready for a change



working with a different age group.



Kylie Bettridge (and baby Greer) will be returning from maternity leave on 4th August. Kylie will be resuming all of her responsibilities as Team Leader of the Junior School. We would like to thank both Sarah and Teryl who have relieved in this role over the last 14 weeks and ensured the very high standards that Kylie sets have been maintained.

NEW CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

To offer more cultural experiences to all areas of the preschools we have purchased a range of musical instruments CDs from around the world from Trade Aid. The African, Latin and South Pacific music have proved to be very popular with the children and teachers alike, so over a period of time we will definitely add to this collection. Also purchased recently are scooters and bikes with trainer wheels for the older children, a variety of fisher price toys for the nursery, puzzles for all areas, room dividers with magnetic, felt and blackboard sides to them enabling the children to place resources on them as well as separating the larger rooms into more defined areas. The family areas in both the Junior School and Preschool are now complete with a shop and cash registers added as well as a concave/convex mirror to share.

POLICY REVIEW:

We are currently reviewing the following policies:

July	August
Child Behaviour Management Children with Special Needs	Curriculum Management

NURSERY NEWS:

For the month of July the children in the nursery have focussed on several topics – animals and the children's pets, cultural aspects from around the world and literacy.

Several of the parents/caregivers/whanau have contributed photos of their children with their pets that have been used to create a book that will be a wonderful addition to the nursery library.

To develop the children's awareness of different aspects of cultures (from around the world) the nursery staff have organised a parent to play the didgeridoo. This coincides with the purchase of the new cultural musical instruments.

All nursery parents/caregivers/whanau have been invited to bring a copy of their child's favourite story for the focus on literacy. This will allow the children to share a familiar story and become aware of new ones!

The nursery has recently incorporated a welcome waiata (song) into the nursery's daily programme.

*Tena koe,
Hello to one,
Tena korua,
Hello to two,
Tena koutou,
Hello to all,
Haere mai everyone,
Welcome everyone!*

JUNIOR SCHOOL NEWS:

This month the Junior School children have focussed on shapes and colours as well as outdoor sports.

The shapes and colours have been intensified throughout the Junior School programme to make the children aware of the shapes and colours in a variety of contexts. Activities such as the traffic lights song have made children aware of the shape of the lights and the colours (and what the colours of the lights signify). Patterns created with the peg boards have also allowed the children to transfer their knowledge

in a creative way. Tino pai o mahi tamariki ma! (Very good work, children!).

Several outdoor activities have also been organised for the children particularly those that encourage the children to develop their ball skills and hand/foot – eye coordination, such as cricket, croquet, soccer and rugby.

PRE-SCHOOL NEWS:

During the past few weeks the preschool children have been focusing on cultural aspects from around the world, winter and self care skills.

An awareness of differing aspects of cultures particularly language, food, dress and significant cultural items (e.g. Russian dolls, flags) as well as identifying the geographical position on the globe. Several children have already contributed to the focus that has made the others aware of the child's cultural heritage/background. Special thanks to Polina for sharing her beautiful Russian dolls and photos, and Rico for providing us with some delicious prawn toast! To develop this further the parents/caregivers/whanau have been invited to share their favourite recipes from around the world for the children to make so that they become aware of other cultural foods.

With the onset of winter the children have also been aware of the importance of wearing winter clothing and how they differ from the clothing required for other seasons.

Self help and care skills have been provided as activities for the children. Activities such as washing dolls clothes and doing the dishes have allowed them to become aware or develop the tasks to help and care for others. Ka pai o mahi, tamariki ma! Good work, children!

Kind regards to you all,
Tonia, Murray, Tracy, Kerry, Clair, Sarah, Chloe,
Jess, Vanessa, Rebecca McIvor,
Rebecca van der Kley, Hilary, Hayley, Kylie, Teryl,
Elleke, Sally, Gary, Jo Boyer, Sharyn, Jo South,
Denise & Toni.