

Editorial

The Power of Play

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This issue of *He Kupu* edition features a number of articles based on presentations made by some of the authors at the New Zealand Tertiary College - *The Power of Play* symposium held 8 March 2019. The articles cover the broad spectrum of play based learning in the early childhood sector; and reflect practical and theoretical perspectives of play based learning from practitioners and academics.

As play is fundamental for early learning the six articles in the Practitioner section will assist to support teachers with practical strategies that they can apply in their play based teaching. Leading this section is an article by Jennifer Fiechtner and Kay Albrecht. It discusses the importance of the teacher's role in supporting child-directed play and offers specific strategies for each age and stage of the early childhood period. Keeping in line with the topic of child directed play, Christine Vincent-Snow and Phoebe Tong's article on playfulness acts to remind teachers to be 'playful' in their teaching; and to incorporate playful teaching into their practices as a pedagogical tool.

Risky outdoor play is the topic of Vikki Hanrahan and Kath Duncan's article. They discuss the benefits of risky play and urge teachers to consider opportunities for children engage in acts of risk-taking in their everyday play. While the outdoor environment offers a number of opportunities for play, Pearl D'Silva's article provides some practical examples of how teachers can think about the spaces and places that surround children. Teachers can contribute to children's learning, by supporting their use of spaces and places in their imaginary play.

Binky Laureta's article on soft skills offers strategies that teachers can use to support the development of soft skills in children through play. The last article in this section by Sue Nicholson and Chelsea Bracefield captures the essence of the articles in this section - the importance of teacher's roles in play based learning. This is evident in the following commentary and articles.

A commentary by the keynote speaker at the symposium Professor Kathy Hirsh-Pask written in collaboration with Professor Roberta Golinkoff emphasises the power of play as a strong pedagogical tool for young children.

The Articles section contains four research based articles. The first article by Cheryl McConnell discusses findings from her research project where she examined the teachers' images of three to four years old boys to analyse the extent to which developmental discourse impacted on teachers' perceptions and their pedagogy with boys.

Mary Jacobs and Matikoora Itonga Marea's article is drawn from a larger qualitative study that looked at the everyday experiences of newly settled families in an Aotearoa New Zealand playgroup. In this article, they explore family interpretations of one child's play and links to the child's home in Kiribati.

Sarah Aiono, Tara McLaughlin and Tracy Riley's article is based on Sarah Aiono's doctoral research. The article discusses the importance of intentional teaching practices in play based learning in ensuring positive outcomes for children.

The last article in this section by Jan Beatson discusses the use of the natural outdoors as a significant learning environment for language development of children through play.

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This issue of *He Kupu* concludes with two book reviews: Barbara Scanlan has reviewed: *The development of play* by David Cohen and Galina Stebletsova provides a review of: *Serious fun: How guided play extends children's learning* co-edited by Marie M. Masterson and Holly Bohart.

I hope that you will find the articles in this edition encourage you to reflect on *The Power of Play* to inform your practices.

Please note that we invite submissions for our upcoming special edition on **Literacy in early childhood education** by 13 February 2020. Please check the website for the call for papers.

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