

Early Years Hub Study Tour - Sites

Intent

Two members (Tara Moala from SKIP and Philippa Holmes from TLC) of the Early Years Hub (EYH) Project Team visited eight sites around Auckland and one in Palmerston North over a series of four Study Tours. Rhona Kelly from Tāmaki Primary joined the tour down to Palmerston North. The intention of these visits were to gather information and knowledge of key sites that have been recommended as being exemplary in their practice, and to share information gathered, with the EYH Project Team.

Key Areas of Focus

- Whānau Centred Practice
- Parent Led Initiatives
- Good practice responding to parent needs
- The combining of services
- How certain facilities were custom built
- Any co-design practice in action

This is a full report that focuses on what each of the sites do well within these areas of focus and any suggestions that the staff we spoke to have, in what they would like to see done differently or to be aware of. A more concise report titled “Early Years Hub Study Tour - Key Findings” outlines more specific recommendations for the development of the organising and systems of The Early Years Hub.

Acknowledgements

- The hours that Tara spent in engaging with the organisations and organising each of the Study Tours, through a contract with SKIP and managed by The Glen Innes Family Centre.
- This report was written in collaboration between Tara (SKIP Champion) and Philippa (TLC Co-ordinator). It is acknowledged that those hours have been given by their respective organisations.
- The travel expenses to get to each Study Tour including the flight and expenses to get to Palmerston North was paid for by The Tāmaki Regeneration Company.
- The time given by the staff of each of the nine sites that were visited and their kindness in sharing their knowledge and expertise for us while we visited and to include in this report.

Outcome

All four of the study tours were worth while, with surprising findings coming from all of them. We feel very lucky to have been able to learn directly from the practitioners and owners on the ground and are grateful to them, for enabling us to visit, observe, ask questions and even compare services. All of them were open and supportive. This document was developed to reflect and identify the findings from each site visit into our key areas of focus. With this now, we are able to consolidate common best practice through out the 10 sites we have documented and create recommendations for a key findings document.

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Study Tour Sites

Type	Name	Location	Interest
Early Childhood Education Centres	Te Puna Kōhungahunga	Central Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whānau Centred Practice within an ECE
	Auckland Girls Grammar Childcare		
	Play and Learn Nature	South Auckland	
	Chrysalis	West Auckland	
	Nurture Early Learning		
Parenting Centres	Manurewa Parenting Hub	South Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Parent-led initiatives
	The Parenting Place	Central Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responding to parent needsFacilities
Multi-purpose Facilities	Henderson Living and Learning	West Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whānau Centred Practice within an ECEResponding to parent needsCombining services
	Te Aroha Noa	Palmerston North	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whānau Centred Practice within an ECEParent-led initiativesResponding to parent needsCombining servicesCo-Design practice
	Takanini Family Service Centre	South Auckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FacilitiesCombining services

Early Childhood Education Centres

Te Puna Kōhungahunga

Central Auckland Māori Medium ECE

This is a Māori medium ECE that is run within The University of Auckland, Epsom Campus. This means that it is accountable to the University but is also run independently with their own manager and structure. The ECE is well set up and has a strong group of whānau that use the centre. They are currently full.

- **Whānau Centred Practice**

- When children are first enrolled parents aren't encouraged to stay to help the child settle. Once they are, families are welcome to stay and pop in and out or stay at the centre with the child. We witnessed this while on the session that we visited. Parents were encouraged to join in on the play and activities that were happening.
- Whānau are encouraged to come back. "Once you are whānau, you are always whānau". This means that past children that are older than 5 yrs old, return for sessions in holidays and attend the activities that the ECE hold. At those times, the older children, help the younger children on session and in doing jobs for the centre.
- The transition into school is regarded as an important event for their children, and effort is taken to travel to the school's that the children are going to, wherever it is. Typically, children mostly go to language units from this ECE and the whole centre will go to tautoko the transition of the child.
- The Centre Manager (Karen) talked about the importance of whānau to whānau role modelling to help whānau learn and grow in their work at the centre and in their own lives.

- **Parent Led Initiative**

- The centre runs a Noho Marae once a year. The whānau of the centre choose a marae that one whānau has an affiliation to, and the whole centre go with all of the whānau. This has become a part of their culture and when whānau join the centre, they are told about it. All of the whānau are invited to come, including all of the children in the whānau and any other extended whānau that is interested.
 - The centre is able to fundraise for the Noho Marae through raffles that the parents lead and work hard to achieve. Whānau also run other events to raise funds for the activities that the centre does. Finances are not regarded as barriers to whānau attending or being involved in the activities. Whānau connect with the manager and help is given when needed.
 - The Noho Marae is used as an intentional tool to encourage whānau to be involved. After the Noho, whānau are more connected with the centre and more engaged in the activities of the centre.
- The centre has found that activities that require high ratios of parents attending, they now struggle with getting them to attend. So, the centre manager sent an email reminder to parents to ask that they put the walk in their diary and reminded them that this is the centre culture and an expectation that they signed up for, when picking the centre.

*“Parents will do what they can,
we just need to help them where we can...
Parents are much more time poor now”.*

- The centre used to hold a monthly hui with parents, however due to a drop in attendance, they have decided to change this to a termly hui, which will now be compulsory for whānau to attend.
 - Through out our kōrero, it was discussed that the centre had high expectations of whānau involvement and that is discussed in detail with each whānau that joins. The importance of strong leadership in the centre is what helps to ensure that commitment to high involvement is maintained.
 - Whānau are encouraged to set session times that work for them, rather than being firm on children arriving at a set time and leaving at a set time.
 - The centre tries to make an environment as close to home as possible.
- **Other thoughts**
 - The centre is mixed aged. They found that separating the babies out from the older children didn't suit the teachers or whānau. It took some time to get accustomed to it, the centre needed to figure out some form of system that supports the older children learning and caters to the babies needs at the same time.

*“In a whanau everyone takes responsibility,
it is not just a one on one relationship.”*

- The centre has chosen a smaller number of whānau and children than their licensed numbers, to better fit the mixed ages and cater to all of their current whānau in their centre.

**“Whānau that
have done it
before show the
whānau who are
new what to do,
then the new
whānau are in a
position to help
people learn.”**

- Karen Liley

Te Puna Kohungahunga



Te Puna Kohungahunga, Epsom

Auckland Girls Grammar Childcare

Central Auckland ECE

This childcare is an independent childcare that is situated beside AGG's. They are independent from the school and they work entirely separate. They are a small centre with only 32 children on their licence.

- **Whānau Centred Practice**

- The centre believes that a stable team of teachers is the key to happy children and their families. A good team makes a difference. The manager values this and the children thrive off having a good team as well.
- The centre holds an open door policy so that parents can visit any time.
- The centre also holds events that whānau come along to.
- Teachers find that parents use the space to meet up with each other during the pick up and drop off times. There have been several parents that have created friendships through this time, the centre provides a relaxed environment where parents can sit and talk while the children are playing.
- It was acknowledged that sometimes parents can be hard to engage in their children's learning. Usually families share verbally rather than written. Often families share more when their children are under 3.

- **Other thoughts**

- Separate office for staff for teachers non contact time, a quiet space to get work done as it cant be done in a staffroom where people are also eating / talking.
- It was highlighted that storage is really important for the ECE.

Play and Learn Nature

South Auckland ECE

West Auckland Playgroups

Play and Learn includes several Early Childhood Education facilities, teacher-led and parent-led Playgroups. The site that we visited was in South Auckland, however we discussed the initiatives through out the business. The business is privately owned by one person and the majority of funds are placed back into the business for the running of the community initiatives. The philosophy of the business is that every child deserves an organic childhood rich with natural experiences similar to the standards of Forest Schools overseas. Because of this, all playgroup sessions are based outside at reserves and parks. The ECE centres have large outside environments where the majority of sessions are based.



Play and Learn Nature Kindergarten, Papatoetoe

- **Whānau Centred Practice**

- The business is modelled on a “Whānau based approach” which encourages a decentralised approach. Planning meetings include parents, teachers and the owner where ideas for next steps are shared, team planning and reviews collectively. This does depend however on each community and in some areas, families choose not to have as much ownership as others.
- For every community that the business engages with, the response and services offered is different. The culture of the families that become involved changes how the sessions are run and what initiatives are offered. In some situations, the communities have requested one style, which were proven to be unsustainable and so an alternative style was implemented instead. The fluidity of reacting to needs is important to maintain successful engagement.
- Parents are highly involved and at times, there has been conflict between different parenting styles and group discussions around placing judgements on other families have been held. Professional development opportunities are offered to families to learn skills around aspects like this.

- **Parent Led Initiatives**

- Parent involvement is determined by each whānau, they have different initiatives that parents are able to choose from. The ECE centres are teacher led and run, where as the play groups are able to be either teacher led with parent involvement or parent led with teacher support. They are all licensed sessions with Ministry of Education.

“It depends on each community, but if parents can take on leadership of the playgroups, we support them to.

- Deepa Ramalingam
Play and Learn Nature



Play and Learn Nature Kindergarten, Papatoetoe

Chrysalis

West Auckland ECE

Chrysalis is one of four ECE centres run privately by a family, situated in West Auckland. It has been purpose built and is aesthetically beautiful. There are three different spaces within the centre that separates out the babies, toddlers and children. They each have access to their own designated teachers, their own resources and play areas however can observe each other and the flow between the spaces is effortless. They interact and engage with each other at certain times.



- **Whānau Centred Practice**

- The centre encourages their parents to come into their sessions any time that they like. There is always tea and coffee readily available and often scones or other food available at the kitchen bar (at the entrance)

- **Parent Led Initiatives**

- Majority of the actions that parents lead is based around cultural activities and event style - Chinese New Years, Matariki, language weeks. Majority of the leading comes from the teachers with input from parents. While we were there, grandparents of a child came in to play the ukulele on session. Feedback was that some families naturally do this easier than others.

- **Custom build**

- The centre was built with parent involved in mind. This has enabled parents to naturally gather. There are bar stools placed in the kitchen/ reception area which enables parents to sit and have a coffee. At that space, you can see all 3 outside children spaces. It was highlighted in our discussion that many centres/ spaces want parents to be able to be involved and invited in but they don't design well for it.
- There has been a community assumption from the very beginning that this centre was not for certain members of the community - it being too flash and therefore too expensive for their children to attend. To overcome this, the centre has engaged with the community outside of the centre - connecting with churches, community groups and leaders.
- The Playground design incorporated a competition with local primary school children where they drew ideas of what a playground could look like. From this, the landscape architects included a living maze and a village playground style.

- **Other thoughts**

- The centre has created their own learning stories programme that enables whānau and teachers to engage and interact online. This includes Te Whāriki and the philosophies of the centre.
- There has needed to be a conscious effort to work on building a genuine relationship with the community around what the centre can offer and how it can cater to the communities needs. It

is important to the owner that the community feels like this is their space and so they have held open days and night sessions on parenting including speakers and seminars.

- There is a high level of interest in the building and their practices, allowing for that time to cater to this is important.

“The better we know the parents, the better we know the children”.

- Roslyn Jephson
Nurture Early Learning



Chrysalis Early Learning Centre, Avondale

Nurture Early Learning

West Auckland ECE

Nurture Early Learning is a private ECE centre, situated in Avondale, West Auckland. The building is separated out into four separate areas where there is almost not connection between each group. There is also a kitchen/ dining room area where each group visits to have their meals.

• Whānau Centred Practice

- There are communication books for each child between the centre and their family. Parents write notes about what's happening at home to send back with child each day. Parents also input into their child's portfolio.
- Often, parents call teachers for parenting help and information and support is shared over the phone. The teachers supports families from their own knowledge and world view. If they're not able to provide adequate help, they will seek information elsewhere to support the parent, because “The better we know the parents the better we know the children”.
- The centre feel that it's important to have open lines of communication and relationships with their families, because it means it's easier to talk with parents about challenging bits for the child and vice versa.
- When trips happen, there is a 1:1 ratio so one family member needs to attend with their child to help with ratio, this also creates a space for parent interaction.
- They have a constant self review to help prompt the testing of ideas, learning and changing things to fit the current centre culture and needs.

- **How certain facilities were custom built**

- This centre was purpose built with the intention of separating out children into specific age groups and abilities. There is also a large upstairs area that the children can be taken to, to play more active games. There is a lot of intentional separation of activities and children that was built into the design at the beginning.

Parenting Centres

Manurewa Parenting Hub

South Auckland

Based within the school and working through other schools in their community, this organisation is unique and has insights that could directly benefit the setting up of systems for The Early Years Hub. The hub has been funded by one grant through Ministry of Social Development and been approved on a 3 yearly basis. They are governed by an Incorporated Society made of parents, school principals and local community members. They employ 3 local parents and engage with a small number of local parents that connect with the schools that they are linked to.



The Parenting Place Cafe, Greenlane

- **Whānau Centred Practice**

- The initiatives that the hub offer are responding to the requests that their parents have made. The manager stressed that “letting it happen” as the parents wanted them to, was important - allowing open flexible spaces to enable the parents to decide on actions.
- Parents also choose when they come and go from the hub, at times, a parent can be engaging intensely and then just drop off. They will often return when they are able to. It is important for the hub to be the stability in the lives of their parents.

- **Parent Led Initiatives**

- All of the employees at the hub are parents of children that attend local primary schools. They engage with other parents within their lives and link them into activities and support that the hub provide. These employees felt that it was very important to have local parents in key roles, to ensure strong engagement with their clients.

*“It happens by default, because we are parents
and we just let the connections happen”.*

- **Good practice responding to parent needs**

- The Manurewa Parenting Hub intentionally set up within a primary school as a way to engage with local parents. They moved from one primary school to another after being offered a larger space, but they utilise several in the area to engage with local parents.
- The hub originally catered to parents of young children, however as those parents grew older, the hub's began to respond to their altering needs as parents of primary school children. This is an interesting complication with parents still requiring support when the children grow outside of the age bracket.

"Having the school connections helps parents understand that it's a safe space, because the school is their community."

The Parenting Place

Central Auckland

The Parenting Place is a well known charitable organisation (Incorporated Society) that has a large venue in Greenlane that hosts a number of workshops, programmes and office space as well as a large number of initiatives that are run through out New Zealand. They have provided their annual report to us which includes all income and expenditure for the running of their organisation. On average, they apply to 350 grants within a year to run the initiatives that they do.

- **Good practice responding to parent needs**

- The initiatives and activities that The Parenting Place provide to parents are all responsive to their needs. They receive feedback regularly on what initiatives are working well and build on or alter from there. The workshops that are held at the site are an example of that, each term the workshops alter in content according to popularity and feedback.

- **Parent Led Initiatives**

- Certain initiatives are parent-led through The Parenting Place. In particular, Toolbox Parenting, Family Coaching and Building Awesome Whānau are all parent facilitators and coaches who use a specific structure and system to engage and empower other parents.

- **The combining of services**

- Each different section of The Parenting Place is set up independently, to enable complete separation in their actions, however they also work together as and when the need arises.
- Up until recently, the office spaces upstairs were open to anyone renting out, separate to The Parenting Place. However recently, the new CEO has made the move to rent those offices out to entities that are similar to The Parenting Place in philosophy and practice.

- **Custom Build**

- The building was built with moveable walls to ensure they could have small spaces and large spaces. There are 4 different spaces that can cater to different activities at the same time, or be combined to cater to 1 large activity.
- A cafe was built into the site at the beginning, however it is classified as a tea room, rather than a full kitchen. This enables the organisation to sell food, but not make it onsite. The cafe does not make a profit and the staffing of the cafe results in a deficit. It is open Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm. There has been some testing of night and weekend openings, without much success.

- There is a book shop at the site, which sells product that is relevant to parenting aligned with the organisations philosophy, which unfortunately only breaks even financially.
- A magazine is currently being produced, which enables a lot of information to be shared further, this however only breaks even financially as well.
- They have intentionally not built a childcare facility at their site because they were aware that with the licensing and rules around childcare, it can become core business quickly - which is not what The Parenting Place is about. It was acknowledged however that at times, some form of support for child minding would be of benefit for some families.
- The offices upstairs were all separate, but they have recently pulled out a lot of the walls dividing them and are currently developing a more open desk and collective way of working between the organisations within the space.
- There are different hireage costs for different rooms. They have identified different rates for corporate, charitable and tenant.

- **Other thoughts**

- Some thoughts around what they struggle with at the site and what they would like to change:
 - Noise factors. It can get very noisy with the open plan space including the cafe noise, chatter and children playing.
 - The space that was intended for parents to relax and interact with each other is also used a lot for meetings. The multi-purpose use works in some ways, which is why it is used in that way, but also could have been developed differently to cater to that.
 - A multi talented, approachable hostess/ receptionist is at the heart of all interactions at the premise and is the most important person. This person needs to be able to relate to parents that engage, community workers and professionals, and juggle appointments and bookings.
 - There are not enough car parks. They have access to more than 80 car parks and there is not enough. Part of that is where they are located and other people using the

“We have parents leading actions through out our organisation. We tried out people that weren’t parents - it just didn’t work”.

- Janet Hird
Parenting Place



The Parenting Place Cafe, Greenlane

Multipurpose Facilities

Henderson Living and Learning Family Centre

West Auckland

Henderson Living and Learning is run by a foundation that combines access to Social Services with an ECE. There is a social service wing to the building, that has offices to house external organisations - currently Plunket and independent midwives use three of these rooms. There is also a multi-purpose room where the centre runs a young mums programme with 10-15 mums per intake. The other wing houses five different rooms that are separated out into ECE spaces. The first being a free community ECE space where they do licensed session as well as weekly playgroups - this often does not break even financially. However the other four rooms run full time childcare which is full and manages to sustain the community space.

- **Whānau Centred Practice**

- It was identified that whānau needed to have access to a 'stay and play' style of early learning. The development of the community ECE space provides that and they have a separate funding model to the other ECE rooms in the centre. Whānau are encouraged to own this space and be involved in the learning of their children. Often, these whānau move their children into the other ECE rooms when their whānau are ready. This room also has the option of impromptu drop offs when in need.
- All of the ECE rooms follow a RIE philosophy and they interact with whānau if there are any concerns around this philosophy, showing parents why they have adopted that style of learning and the benefits to the children. It enables a space to have a conversation about challenging children, learning through play, extensions of learning and appropriate risk and boundary learning.
- The centre works hard to create a strong culture of whānau connection, staff believe that whānau are the first and best teachers. A lot of whānau connection is done through events held at centre for example, Matariki.

- **The combining of services**

- The Management of the centre believe it is incredibly important to have strong relationships with each other and to work as a team. They also value the relationships that they have with organisations external to their centre to enable a full wrap around of support for the families that they engage with. It is through those strong relationships that they can both work together with ease in referrals and have open lines of communication if greater support is needed for the family.
- The staff of the centre are also multi-trained to be able to cater to needs that arise on the ground
 - managing, admin or parent programme facilitation.

- **How certain facilities were custom built**

- The social service wing is flexible in the multi-purpose space and offices - all have movable walls that can be opened and closed as per need.
- The different practitioners use a shared staffroom type space for breaks and gatherings

- They also have an additional hot desk style working room for any additional over flow of practitioners within any area of the centre.

- **Other thoughts**

- The management of the space is key to the smooth running between the ECE and the community spaces in the building. The centre experience difficulty at the beginning when the culture of the space was forming and there being difficulty between the two different cultures of Social Services and the business of running an ECE. This centre has found it beneficial to have two leads where they separate out the running of those two different focuses of the centre. Each of those two leads do however interlink in their work with the other and support each other. This enables supporting each other, and prevents burnout.

“Most parents will actively seek out the centre because they are trying to find one that aligns with their philosophy”.

- Tash Barton

Henderson Living and Learning.



Henderson Living and Learning, West Auckland

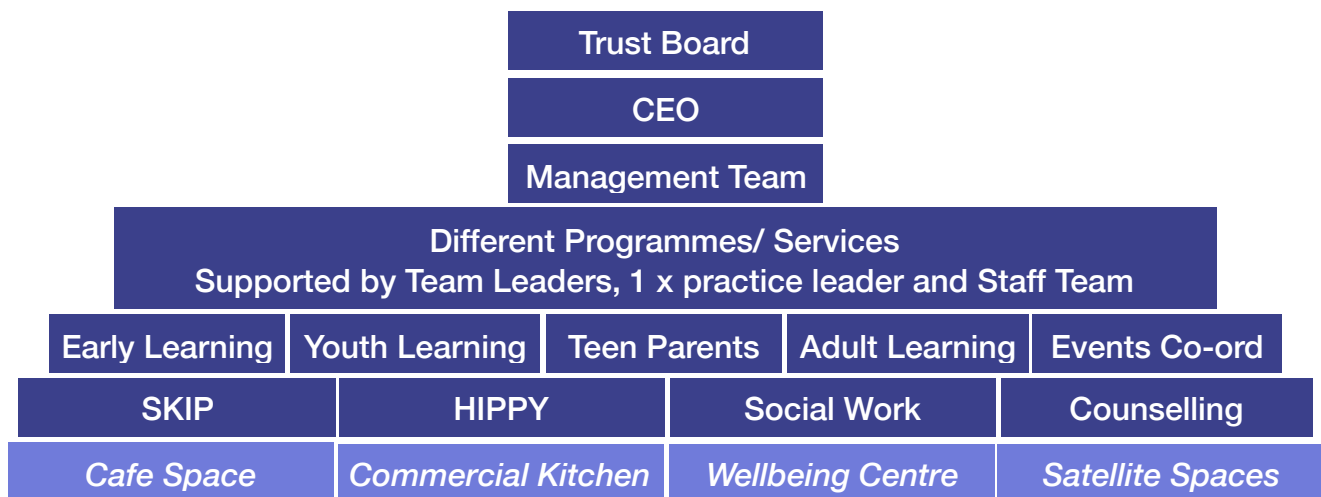
Te Aroha Noa

Palmerston North

Te Aroha Noa was recommended by several different practitioners in varying fields. They appear to have a good reputation for service delivery, whānau centred practice and parent led initiatives. The organisation is also set up with systems that are similar to what we are interested in creating in Tāmaki. Rhonda Kelly (Tāmaki Primary), Philippa Holmes (TLC) and Tara Moala (SKIP) visited this site.

- **Organisational Structure**

- The organisation is set up as a typical Charitable Trust.



- The dark purple boxes are already in place, and the light purple boxes are what the organisation are currently working towards to cater to other needs in the community. These new services also include supporting other fields of practice to interact differently within their community.
- Te Aroha Noa contracts are mainly from The Ministry of Social Development and The Ministry Of Education, although they have received seed money from Philanthropic trusts that enable them to evidence the need and receive ongoing funds from Government entities thereafter.
- There are a lot of part time positions at the organisation, it was highlighted that they hire the right people for the work, rather than create a position that the right people can't attain. currently, they have between 55 to 60 staff, but the hours actually total to 26 full time employment.
- Over the day, the key people we met and talked to, highlighted that it is the people that work within the organisation, that makes the difference. Everyone has the same vision and way of working. The building of the organisations culture is what has helped the organisation to interact differently in the community.
- One of the key learnings that the CEO (Bruce Madden) shared with us, is that the Trust Board and the CEO are risk takers. And it is that risk taking, that has enabled great things to develop.
- The organisations annual reports can be accessed through their website: <http://www.tearohanoa.org.nz/who-we-are.html>

“Have your own vision and kaupapa, keep critically reflecting on it, advocate with funders about how it needs to be done.”

- Bruce Madden

- **Whānau Centred Practice**

- Whānau are not expected to slot into services that are offered by the organisation, instead, the family enters into the organisation and the services wrap around, catering to the needs that the family have. This is more so a culture of the organisation, rather than stated within the practice. Several examples were given where the services remained as fluid and responsive to each families needs as possible.

“When you put a family in the centre you are no longer talking about models, HIPPY, counselling etc, you are talking about what they need.”

“If bad things happen to you, we are the village, the Marae, we will support you and comfort you.”

- **Parent Led Initiatives**

- Whānau are encouraged to develop and grow. One of the Social Workers, told us that she came here after ‘falling over the sign out the front’. She joined the playgroup, and was encouraged to grow. She received support and left to study for a time, to return as an employee.
- The current Playgroup that is run at the organisation, is parent led and run to support local parents of young children to learn and play together. One of the difficulties is having a succession plan for ongoing sustainability.
- It was acknowledged that parent led initiatives need to maintain fluidity because they are based on the work of parents who are often growing within themselves and learning as they develop. This can mean that initiatives will come and go, change in focus, or parents move onto the bigger and better things.

“Once you’re a part of Te Aroha Noa, you will always be one of us.”

- **Good practice responding to parent needs**

- The organisation has grown organically over their 25 years. All of the services that they offer, has been a direct response to what the community needs are. This means that sometimes, services change or end, as the needs end. Likewise, other services arise and develop, responding to new needs.
- Bread is offered in the lounge area of the organisation, available for anyone to take when it is needed.
- Just recently, the organisation rented houses opposite, to use as transition homes for young parents and their young children. This was as a response to a need in the community for housing. It hasn’t quite worked out so they are ‘re-calibrating’ the plan.
- The organisation has set up a ‘young mums house’ that includes social work support, housing support, working with the WINZ ‘Start’ prog, and walking side by side to support young mums in the community.

“Find people who can make a commitment over a long period of time. Bruce has been here from the start. Sometimes needs become apparent through recurring themes [that people]

have in conversation, realising common threads...can sometimes be an 'ah-ha' moment in conversations, staff realise "that's what's happening here, what are we going to do?"

- **The combining of services**

- Transport was regarded as important for Te Aroha Noa to provide. They own 3 vans - one of which is a larger transit version. These vans are used for varying services that provide transport to their participants.
- The management team regard it important to keep connections between different services very important. It can be hard at times, however they notice that the services don't flow as well, when the relationships between the people that run the services aren't strong.

"staff can work smarter when collaborating their skills and workload."

"You can enter whatever door you like, you might enter the skip door, but you have access to everything. Place grow on relationships rather than some intake procedure."

- **How certain facilities were custom built**

- Te Aroha Noa was not custom built in any way. Instead, it morphed and grew as per their communities need did. This enabled a slow growth of property and buildings as the needs for more services also grew. The original trust board of 25 years ago, had no idea what Te Aroha Noa was going to become. Based on that experience and knowledge, we were given this advice:
 - Always think bigger. As your community takes ownership of the building, you will always be short of space.
 - Have a mixture of different sized rooms including moveable walls. And ensure that there are good quality doors that are sound blockers.
 - Incorporate manaakitanga within the design of the building. Food is important and should be regarded as such, so build good kitchen spaces. The culture of organisation can hinge on it.
 - Ensure that you have a good quality build, and rooms that feel homely and warm.
- When building and developing an ECE:
 - Ensure that the ECE is run by the organisation itself and not an outside entity. Ensure that the only stakeholder of the ECE is the organisation.
 - Ensure that when you hire people, that they understand and believe in the model that you want to create. The team needs to support the model for it to truly work, stating that they do, will not be enough for the creation of the model.
 - Define the kaupapa of the ECE thoroughly. Understand why the ECE is being developed and create it on that premise before anything else. Then be consistently vigilant about keeping to that kaupapa no matter what. Once that kaupapa is firm, find people that will fit to that model - do not think that people can be taught to believe in it after they are hired.
 - Develop strong PD for Staff to maintain their knowledge of whānau centred and parent led practice within an ECE setting.

"The building is simply a building, the important thing is the people. Do lots of things to create a team, create a vision, how does this place work, critical reflections. Do it all often."

- **Any co-design practice in action**

- The 2 x Early Childhood Education Centres on site were developed from community need and ran as playgroups for quite some time until the right system was developed to enable Te Aroha Noa to create an ECE model that would work for them. They took the best of both current models of ECE (Playcentre and Standard ECE) to develop theirs. They have qualified ECE teachers working alongside parents as involved educators within their centre. The teachers are split between:
 - Qualified Teachers
 - Student Teachers
 - Parent Educators (Some paid, some unpaid)
- There is a relaxed environment in the ECE's, where parents can come to play with their children and help educate, and also hang out with others parents. The whānau that join the ECE's know about the culture of the centre and that if the child is under 3 years old, it is expected for a parent to attend with the child.
- System Set Up
 - Financially, the system is tight, with the full qualified funding model paying for the service, and the funds allocated to pay for the ECE teachers divided up to enable some money to pay for parent educators as well.
 - The ECE is run under one licence for a total of 75 children including 20 under 2 year olds.
 - The manager tries to hold the numbers as 45, to enable fluidity in drop in whānau that join in like a playgroup. This is because they have an open door policy that allows for whānau to join the ECE without any pressure. If needed, there is a whānau room attached to the ECE.
 - All educators and volunteers are police vetted.

- **Other thoughts**

- The organisation has a strong relationship with the community and other services around them. They have regular meetings with other learning services to discuss what they are doing and how they can work together for the coming term.
- There is a need for a 'front line - meeter and greeter' within a community led service. This enables the scene to be set from the beginning that the organisation is about catering to community needs. Spending time with families in casual conversations through a 'lounge area' enables families to take ownership of the organisation and for staff to learn and understand true needs of families. Because of this, and to prevent a 'them and us' culture, there is no staff room in Te Aroha Noa, only the lounge. Manaakitanga is regarded as a key part of the organisations culture.
- The organisation is regarded as a space to base at, the staff are often out in the community working.
- Evaluations and Reflection Practices are predominantly internal. They do however seek support to do so. The organisation has developed a culture of strong reflection, and created 'friends of the organisation' that support the evaluations they do - Robyn Munford from Massey University and Annalise Myers from SKIP are particularly helpful. Forming a partnership with a university over a long period of time, is a successful model.
- Even after 25 years, the trust board is still a work in progress. Self selection appears to be a better process. There are currently a number of board members that directly link to different services in the organisation. The hope is that more cultural reflection and representation of the

community is present in the future. Having strategically high profile people on the board, can enable the development of a board culture that will be able to see and enact on opportunities.

Alternative Education

- Rhonda talked about having an alternative education in the same ground space in Tamaki Primary grounds, so that the early years hub and schools with additional facilities becomes a much more holistic hub for the needs of families and children. Rhonda talked about the space becoming a 'learning campus' site.
- The organisations two youth programmes believe that it is important get into the home with parents and affecting the change in the home.
- The youth programmes arose out of staff identifying the need through seeing the same need over and over again, Workers saw that there was nothing in the community for these young people to go to, so stepped up to fill it.

“Trust your own wisdom and keep control of the vital parts of the development of your initiative. Your instincts are trustworthy”.

- Bruce Madden
CEO, Te Aroha Noa



Te Aroha Noa, Palmerston North

Takanini Family Service Centre

South Auckland

The Takanini Family Service Centre is run by Great Potentials Foundation. The organisation combines a number of health and wellbeing services with an Early Learning Centre. We did not officially visit this centre despite attempts to organise, however Tara did pop into the Takanini Centre unannounced, grabbed flyers and had a quick look around. This may not do the centre justice, however it is worth a mention. Because we didn't connect with anyone, I am unable to relay all that they offer. I will only focus on what I do know they have.

- **The combining of services**

- The centre has different social services running alongside their ECE centres. They are predominantly services that cater to the needs of young families and families in need - HIPPY, playgroups, budgeting, adult literacy, counselling, parenting programmes, youth programmes, family conferences, legal aid and health clinics.
- The centre appears to have large amount of storage, small areas to meet quietly to chat, and allocated office and meeting rooms for appointments.
- When talking on the phone to the administrator, she mentioned that the ECE is independently run and does not work in collaboration with the rest of the facilities - this meant that she was unable to tell me if I would be able to visit both the community wing as well as the ECE. This told me that they do not work too closely in combining service models.

- **How certain facilities were custom built**

- The centre has been custom built and planned for the services that it offers. It reminds me of a medical centre in its' colour and lay out.
- The centre has two wings, one is focused on the Early Learning and different rooms separate out the ages groups for learning separately - including the separation of the outside play areas. The other wing appears to be focused on the programmes and services that are offered at the centre.



Takanini Family Service Centre, South Auckland