How do we meet the needs of teachers, children and their parents in regards to Outings?
Why did I do this research?

- Outings were not happening on a regular basis.

- It had been brought up in a Board of Trustees meeting that the centre should do more whole centre outings.

- What was the communities feelings?

- I believe that when people share their ideas, needs and wants about an issue a deeper understanding of each other is achieved which allows for genuine and relevant planning that includes all parties.
Methodology and Methods

Methodology

- Action Research
- Because of the need for change.

Methods

- Teacher Questionnaire (5)
- Parent questionnaire – using randomisation to reduce participants. (10)
- And an adapted questionnaire called the “child talk” (11 - 4 year olds)
- Reflective journal.
Ethics.

- Followed Manukau Institute of Technology 8 ethical principles (Manukau Institute of technology Ethics Committee, 2010).

- No harm and kept fully informed.

- I considered what parents and colleagues wanted to know.

- Informed consent and young children should be continuously negotiated (Robert-Holmes, 2011).
Literature Review

**The benefits of excursions**
Plays a role in physical sensory, cognitive and social development. Also connects children to nature. (Baille, 2010; Gambino, Davis & Rowntree, 2009; McLachlan, 2006; Torquati, Gabriel, Jones-Branch & Leeper-Miller, 2010; Wolke, 2004)

**Successful planning for Excursions**
Require thoughtful meaning planning (Taylor, Morris & Cordeau-Young, 1997).
Benefits of positive attitudes to risk and frequent experiences for teachers (Bullard, 2010; Chettleburgh)

**Benefits of styles of excursions.**
Helm and Katz (2011) discuss the benefits of small group outings particularly as they can focus children on connecting to nature.

When parents involved they can be closer to their child’s learning.

**Collaboration**
Requires a equal playing field (Alasuutari, 2010). Brink (2002) suggests results are strengthened relationships.
Wenger (1998) “what makes information knowledge – what makes it empowering – is the way in which it can be integrated within an identity of participation (p.220)
Phase 1 - Teachers
What this phase showed about teachers’ needs.

- The importance for teachers of practicalities, ratios and safety.
- Disagreement on style and frequency of outings and planning for before and after outings.
Phase 2 – Parents
Randomisation
What this phase showed about parents’ needs.

From Questionnaire

- 100% wanted small group outings once a term for their own child.
- Parents want learning and new experiences for their children.
Reflective journal entry.

- Shared language preventing parents participating in research. Important for centre to recognise all voices are to be heard.

Entry from my journal

“This was the most frustrating part of the research; parents that wanted to be involved but a shared language preventing it. I’d never really experienced before the power held in the English language.”
Phases 3 – Children
Child talk
What this phase showed about children’s needs.

From Questionnaire

- Children want to leave the centre on outings.
- Do not like it when their own mum not included.
Reflective journal entry

From Journal

- Each child had very clear ideas on individually where they want to go. Question to parents and teachers – Do we ever take the time to ask for their opinions?
“I imagined myself as a leader. My thoughts were in real life this would take tremendous courage and confidence in those around me. I would need to find ways to have clear, honest and reciprocal communication. In addition I would need to genuinely have a core philosophy on developing trusting relationships and the principles of inclusion. Will I have the ability in the future to let go? To share the power that teachers have?”

This is a big question!
Implications for practice
Where now at end of research?

Can we:

- continue to listen to each groups wants and needs.
- find ways to involve the centre community?
- Build “a community [which] holds the key to real transformation – the kind that has real effects on people’s lives” (Wenger, 1998, p.85).
A year later
What are my thoughts on this research now?

- This research was always a personal journey for me. It taught me to open my eyes to the uniqueness of the centre I am working in. Asking the question

What do we ALL need now at this moment?
A year later
What are my thoughts on this research now?

- I still feel passionate about finding ways that include everyone – not just the loudest voices.

The centre I am working in now is just exploring the benefits of networking with other centres in the area. This may be a way of bridging the gaps in language by sharing the resources across centres.
A year later
What are my thoughts on this research now?

- This has never left me - Children know their own minds. I just need to take the time to listen.

They are motivated, interested, competent, confident participators in their own, learning and development (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.9).
References


Bailie, P. (2010). From the one-hour field trip to a nature preschool: Partnering with environmental organizations. Young Children, 65(4), 76-82.


References


