

Barnardos New Zealand

Bethlehem Tertiary Institute

Christian Early Childhood Education Association of Aotearoa

National Association of ECE Directors in Universities

The Open Polytechnic

Te Wananga o Aotearoa

NZ Educational Institute Te Riu Roa

NZ Home-based Early Childhood Education Association

NZ Hospital Play Specialists Association

NZ Kindergartens Te Putahi Kura Puhou o Aotearoa

NZ Playcentre Federation

NZ Rudolf Steiner Federation

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

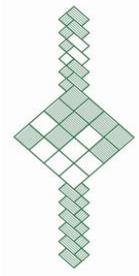
The Early Childhood Service of Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu: The Correspondence School

The Early Intervention Association of Aotearoa NZ

World Organisation for Early Childhood Education OMEP Aotearoa NZ

Montessori Association of Aotearoa New Zealand

Early Education Federation



News Update – 11 May 2017

EVENTS/MEETINGS/SEMINARS/CONFERENCES

Budget breakfasts – 26 May 2017

From: Prudence Stone – UNICEF NZ - 8th May 2017

The pre-Budget announcements are coming thick and fast... Will the Government's 'social investment' and income support packages turn the tide on child poverty and homelessness? What are the policies needed for children and communities to thrive, and does Budget 2017 deliver on them?

For independent expert analysis, come to the Post Budget Breakfast on May 26th, organised by local branches of the Public Health Association and Child Poverty Action Group. Alan Johnson (CPAG/Salvation Army), Laura O'Connell Rapira (Action Station/Rock Enrol) and other leading commentators will be addressing these questions and more. Professor Michael Baker (University of Otago) will chair the event, which promises, as always, to cut through the political spin and provide insightful discussion and inspiration for Wellingtonians who care about equity. Registration is essential, and prepayment is much appreciated. Please subsidise a low-income person to attend if you can, by choosing the \$30 ticket option.

Even if you can't make it, please share event info with people and groups who may be interested, and/or invite friends via Facebook. Thanks for your support.

See attached flyer

Information about budget breakfasts in other centres is available here: <http://www.cpag.org.nz/may-nationwide-post-budget-breakfasts/>

FIZZ Symposium – 26 June 2017

Taxing Sugary Drinks – an election issue

From: FIZZ – 9th May 2017

When: Monday 26th June, 2017

Where: Clinical Education, Centre, Auckland City Hospital

Flyer attached - please circulate widely.

Enquiries: **Gerhard Sundborn** <g.sundborn@auckland.ac.nz>

Reduced Early Bird Registration fee = \$50 until June 5th, After = \$100 (register at <http://www.fizz.org.nz>)

Māori Public Health Symposium – 19 June 2017

Business - Innovation - Health

From: Public Health Association – 9th May 2017

Where: Waipuna Conference Centre, Mount Wellington, Auckland

When: 19 June 2017, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Come and be inspired, commit to action, indulge in thought innovation and creative korero. [Speaker Information here.](#)

Following the success of the last two oversubscribed Māori Public Health Symposia, the Public Health Association will host a third, this time in Auckland.

The theme, Māori Public Health: Business - Innovation - Health, invites creative conversation in the solutions we design in Public Health, embracing business and new ways of funding to have more freedom in defining the future of Māori Public Health.

This is a workshop-style symposium with savvy aspirational leaders from Health, Business, Research and successful youth-driven initiatives.

Register online at www.pha.org.nz/mphs.

E ngā Rangatira hurinoa i te motu, nau mai, whakatinana mai o tumanako waioratanga mo te Iwi Māori!!

Auckland launch of Child Poverty and Mental Health – 18 May 2017

A Literature Review

From: Child Poverty Action Group – 8th May 2017

When: Thursday, May 18, 2017 from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM NZST

Where: City Mission, 140 Hobson Street, Auckland.

Child Poverty Action Group and the New Zealand Psychological Society warmly invite you to attend the report launch of *Child Poverty and Mental Health: A Literature Review* at the Auckland City Mission.

Register Now!

Large numbers of children in New Zealand suffer from mental health problems, and large numbers of children suffer from poverty and hardship.

This launch will discuss the findings and issues around the relationship between poverty experienced during childhood and the impact that poverty may have on the mental health of a child or young person, or later in their adulthood.

Professor Angus Hikairo Macfarlane - Angus Hikairo Macfarlane (Ngati Whakaue) is the Kaihautu of the New Zealand Psychological Society. Professor Macfarlane is the Director of Te Ru Rangahau, the Maori Research Laboratory at the University of Canterbury. His research explores cultural concepts and strategies that influence professional practice.

Quentin Abraham - Quentin Abraham is the current President of the New Zealand Psychological Society. He works in private as an educational psychologist with 26 years' experience.

Associate Professor Kerry Gibson - Kerry Gibson is an Associate Professor in the School of Psychology at the University of Auckland. She is a clinical psychologist and former President of the New Zealand Psychological Society.

Professor Innes Asher - Innes is a Paediatrician (Starship Children's Hospital, Auckland) and CPAG's children's health spokesperson. She chairs the Global Asthma Network. In 2017 she was appointed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to their inaugural Expert Panel on Non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

GOVERNMENT POLICY and LEGISLATION

Will Joyce's Working for Families changes be enough?

Media Release

From: Child Poverty Action Group – 5th May 2017

Budget 2017 must significantly step up the level of income support for low-income families to prevent an escalation in child poverty and reverse damage done by past policy, says Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG).

Minister of Economic Development Steven Joyce says there will be increases to Working for Families (WFF) - a long-awaited response to CPAG's Fix Working for Families (FWFF) campaign.

But the changes must be comprehensive, and benefit all families in need - not just some.

"Tinkering around the edges of the system will never solve the increasing poverty seen in families both on benefits and in low paid work," warns CPAG economics spokesperson, Associate Professor Susan St John.

The purpose of Working for Families tax credits is to recognise the extra income needs of families raising children.

"Unfortunately WFF is very badly designed and has been quietly eroded by policies set in motion automatically since 2012, which have been highly damaging" says St John.

"CPAG research shows that real spending on WFF has fallen sharply and now it would take an extra \$700 million per annum just to restore its real value. Moreover the worst-off families remain excluded from a substantial portion, the In-Work Tax Credit, worth at least \$72.50 for those who meet criteria.

"More working families are struggling, while the worst-off families, those on benefits, have fallen even further behind. Including them in the full WFF would cost around another \$500m."

Joyce has said that the Government will be looking at WFF because it now recognises that low-income working families are struggling to survive.

CPAG strongly recommends that the cuts are restored and WFF made more inclusive. This would mean:

- The income threshold for maximum payments is lifted to a much more realistic level.
- The rate of abatement is reduced to 20%.
- The work-hours criterion and the requirement to be off-benefit are removed from the In-Work Tax Credit.
- All parts of WFF are properly indexed, with automatic adjustments to reflect wage and price movements every year.

To invest in children and make the necessary difference in the lives of struggling families the problems inherent in WFF must be fixed immediately.

National focuses on vulnerable children in PM's pre-Budget speech, \$321m 'social investment' package

From: Stuff – 3rd May 2017

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/92166031/national-focuses-on-vulnerable-children-in-pms-prebudget-speech>

When Good Intentions Are Not Enough:

Smart Investment in Families Needs to Look To a Thriving Future for All.

From: Jess Berentson-Shaw, Morgan Foundation – 4th May, 2017

“I have put together a piece on this and a metaphor to help explain why social investment is not all it is cracked up to be. There are many different lenses to view SI through, but this is the simplest one I have managed to articulate for a general public discussion”

<http://morganfoundation.org.nz/good-intentions-not-enough-smart-investment-families-needs-look-thriving-future/>

More houses should be the primary target

Media Release

From: Child Poverty Action Group – 5th May 2017

While the Government’s new Better Public Services (BPS) health targets are laudable, the housing target has fallen far from the mark of making a real commitment to improving the lives of New Zealand’s high-need families and children, says Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG).

The target of "achieving a 20 per cent reduction in the time it takes to house priority clients on the social housing register" sidelines the crucial issue of an urgent need for extra state and social housing.

Furthermore this target can be easily manipulated by those responsible for achieving it to the point that the target is rendered effectively meaningless.

CPAG co-convenor Alan Johnson says, "The social housing Priority A waiting list grew 49% over the past year for no apparent reason, other than a change in policy following a spotlight on Ministry of Social Development (MSD) inadvertently paying for families to live in garages rented by so-called emergency housing providers.

"Clearly the waiting list can be manipulated by MSD managers without any agreed changes in policy so there is little reason to believe that this new target will not be met through some form of alternative reporting or recording."

CPAG says that the Government needs to set more meaningful housing targets to improve the current situation in New Zealand, which is one of desperate and urgent need.

Increasing the number of additional state and other social housing units that will be built over the next five years should be the top priority.

Achieving any target to increase - and not reduce, the numbers of state and social housing is the only meaningful way reducing the critical unmet housing need that is evidenced by the explosion of emergency housing budgets.

Proposed funding model could do more harm

From: Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) – 20 April, 2017

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) says that axing the current decile funding system on the basis that it is too crude, only to replace it with another that is already said to be unreliable, may have the result of seriously disadvantaging schools on a national level.

A new Targeted at Risk Funding (TARF) component of the operational grant was introduced in the 2016 Budget. Instead of fully increasing operational grants to all schools, funding was instead targeted to support 'at risk' students. Students at risk were those whose parents had been on benefits for 75% of the first five years of the student's life or 75% of the last five years. The 2016 Budget allocated \$43.2 million over four years to 150,000 targeted 'at risk' children through TARF.

Outgoing Education Minister Hekia Parata has backed a proposal to replace the current decile system with a predictive risk modelling (PRM) system that individually targets 'at risk' students. This approach aligns with the Government's new Social Investment model. PRM was originally developed for use by the Ministry of Social Development in relation to preventing child maltreatment. The latest reports suggest Ms Parata is hoping to have sign-off for the new system before she exits her role in Parliament.

A major flaw in the TARF approach is that the 'at risk' criteria aimed at identifying the most 'vulnerable' children exclude many children who are experiencing severe material hardship. These children are also known to be at increased risk of poor educational outcomes, but will not benefit from TARF because they do not meet the criteria. Another major flaw is that the TARF model is based on contextual or household risk indicators, not specific indicators of a child's educational need. A third major flaw is that the decile system is used to additional "Vote Education" resources to the most disadvantaged school communities. Professor John O'Neill, CPAG education spokesperson says that, "Abandoning decile based resource allocation without a sufficiently precise and educationally valid replacement is like throwing the baby out with the bathwater."

"It is important to provide a solution to funding more comprehensively across the board, and not simply rob one educational funding pot to pay another."

The overall picture shows New Zealand schools are being funded inadequately per student across the student's 13 years at school, receiving around 40% less funding than other OECD countries such as Finland, Denmark and Ireland, whose schools rank among the highest for educational achievement. It stands to reason that better funding will significantly improve the opportunities for many children.

The New Zealand Treasury's analysis has also shown that basing Government educational funding solely on the risk of not having a successful life outcomes is too unreliable. In contrast the indicators used to allocate Targeted Funding for Educational Achievement (TFEA) are strongly correlated with actual educational underachievement: low-income households, low skill parental employment, household crowding, lack of parental qualifications, parents receiving income support.

"In this context, any funding targeted at children deemed to be at risk of educational underachievement must be additional to TFEA, not instead of it," says Professor O'Neill.

CPAG says that a successful funding model would retain the principles of the current decile funding system, with an increase in overall per-student spending for all schools, while incorporating the new targeted funding model as an additional support for learning. This would provide Government with some assurance that it was 'targeting' its limited additional funding support to both educational and contextual support needs of children.

Furthermore, addressing individual need must come at a familial level. Family income needs must be addressed urgently, and all schools must have the necessary provisions so that children living in material poverty have a greater chance of receiving the all the resources, support and expertise they need to help them achieve by the time they leave school.

A variety of reactions to Te Whāriki 2017

From: OMEP Wellington – 15th April 2017

Bungle over new Early Childhood Education Curriculum

Wednesday 12 April 2017

Press release: ChildForum

A new early childhood curriculum replacing the current ‘Te Whāriki’ document has been published on the Ministry of Education website – without prior announcement until its release today and near the eve of the long Easter weekend and the start of term break.

The curriculum’s draft revision faced strong criticism from many in the sector regarding content and presentation, and the Federation of Rudolf Steiner Schools sought legal advice and wrote to the Minister claiming that the consultation process breached statutory and legal requirements.

Chief executive of ChildForum Dr Sarah Alexander says that the final copy is significantly better than the draft, the Ministry having obviously put in a large effort to get things right.

“However, there remain some major deficiencies that could have also been put right had the Ministry done more work on this.

“Many teachers were expressing a lack of ownership and sense of disempowerment owing to the way the Ministry consulted the sector over a draft revision and the short time frame just before Christmas,” says Dr Alexander.

Teachers were not given an opportunity to view and give feedback on another iteration of the draft following the pre-Christmas-rushed consultation to make sure it is the best it can be before the final copy was published today.

The lack of consultation and engagement in discussions with parents throughout NZ has also been disappointing given that children are not participating in formal compulsory education.

“The curricula of other countries were not reviewed and drawn on to make use of international knowledge and experience since it was first written 20 years ago. It also does not appear that the final document has had any independent international expert review, which is unfortunate”, says Dr Alexander.

Dr Helen Hedges, a writer contracted by the Ministry to re-write the curriculum, commented in a blog on the short time frame for revision saying, “I was honoured to be selected to be part of the writing team to update and revise the document – in an impossibly short time frame.”

In a video celebrating 20 Years of Te Whāriki, Professor Helen May, a lead writer of the original curriculum emphasised that curriculum should not be prescriptive.

“From the start, we had a vision of a fully qualified early childhood workforce. We did not put this in Te Whāriki but we did pitch it at a level that assumed teachers would have theoretical knowledge, the cultural knowledge, and the professional judgment, to weave the curriculum with their whanau, with the children, with their colleagues.”

Dr Alexander warns that by the Ministry adopting the word ‘kaiako’ and saying that it is to encompass all teachers qualified or not, the path has been laid for the de-professionalism of early childhood teaching.

In the new Te Whāriki document, the Ministry states:

“Although ECE services use a range of different terms, this document uses kaiako because it conveys the reciprocal nature of teaching and learning.”

Dr Alexander says that this may leave early childhood teachers wondering about the purpose of becoming qualified and retaining their certification and why they are referred to as 'kaiako' when all school teachers are not and teaching and learning is also reciprocal at school level.

According to Prof May, the original Te Whāriki was not designed to be a curriculum that told teachers what to do.

At the time one large chain operator even advised the writers they should "just make it easy for my girls so they'll know what to do on Monday".

The new Te Whāriki had been designed more towards telling teachers what to do and it outlines evidence to be collected on children's learning and states what children must demonstrate to show they have achieved learning outcomes.

"There is now a real possibility of movement towards checklist teaching," says Dr Alexander.

"Our young children must be able to have an unpressured early childhood with rich learning experiences and play. This is probably not the path that most parents and teachers would want to see New Zealand early childcare and education take."

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1704/S00049/council-welcomes-new-curriculum-with-one-big-reservation.htm>

Council welcomes new curriculum – with one big reservation

Wednesday: 12 April 2017, 3:40 pm

Press Release: Early Childhood Council

Early Childhood Council welcomes new early childhood education curriculum – with one big reservation

The Early Childhood Council has praised today's (12 April) release of an update to New Zealand's early childhood education curriculum – 'with one big reservation'.

CEO Peter Reynolds said the two-decade-old curriculum, Te Whāriki, was due for an update, but that 'this update will have minimal impact if the Government fails to fund the professional development necessary to bring teachers up to speed'.

Mr Reynolds said that 20 years ago, when the old curriculum was introduced, the then Government 'promised resources to help early childhood services implement it'.

But these did not arrive in sufficient quantity, and implementation was, and remained 'uneven across the country'.

The \$4 million dollars the current Government had allocated for professional development to implement the new curriculum was 'a small amount that might not get the job done', Mr Reynolds said. And he was 'concerned that history might repeat itself'.

'There's only limited point in a refreshed curriculum if many services fail to implement it,' he said.

Mr Reynolds said the new curriculum was well-thought through and presented, and called on the early childhood education sector to work with the Ministry of Education to implement it thoroughly.

He said the reduction of learning outcomes from 118 to 20 would focus teachers and 'make everything much more comprehensible for parents', and the improved links between the early childhood and school curriculums would help create 'a seamless experience for children and their families'.

The Early Childhood Council is New Zealand's leading representative body for childcare centre owners, committees and management. It has a membership of more than 1100 early childhood education centres.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1704/S00048/updated-early-childhood-curriculum-welcomed-by-advocates.htm>

Updated early childhood curriculum welcomed by advocates

Wednesday: 12 April 2017

Press release: Te Rito Maioha / ECNZ

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand (ECNZ) today welcomed the updated Te Whāriki, New Zealand's early childhood education (ECE) curriculum, just released by the Ministry of Education.

'Ahead of the 2014 election we began lobbying government to revisit and strengthen Te Whāriki so that every child experiences a rich curriculum,' said Kathy Wolfe. Government heard this call and, overall we're pleased with the new document.'

Updating what has become a taonga was always going to be a huge challenge. It was essential that the Ministry took up this challenge, along with the ECE sector. Te Whāriki was first published over 20 years ago, and while it was highly regarded both nationally and globally, it needed to be updated to reflect the world our children live in today and how they learn.

Ms Wolfe said that the submission ECNZ provided on behalf of members, staff and its Council has been responded to in the final document.

'We feel that we've been heard, and this is encouraging. We'd like to commend the Ministry on getting the updated Te Whāriki to a good place for the sector, and most importantly for children.'

'We're heartened to see the commitment to biculturalism reflected front and centre. Also, the organisation is encouraged that \$4m has been earmarked for professional development for the sector.'

'We thank the Ministry for their commitment to investing in professional development for teachers,' said Ms Wolfe. 'As with any curriculum, its true success is determined by the people charged with delivering its contents and those receiving the professional development. These are the teachers that work with over 200,000 tamariki every day. The challenge now is that kaiako pick up the baton and provide high quality consistent delivery of Te Whāriki in their centre.'

'I would like to extend our thanks to Sir Tamati Reedy, Lady Tilly Reedy and the writing team for their work. I also thank our former Chief Executive Nancy Bell (now Director Early Learning with the Ministry) for leading this critical project.'

Ms Wolfe said that while today was a day to celebrate it was important to note that having a 100% qualified workforce to deliver the refreshed Te Whāriki was another key aspect to ensuring high quality ECE provision. Ms Wolfe calls on all political parties to reflect this in their ECE policies in the lead up to the September election.

Release of revised Te Whāriki welcomed

Wednesday: 12 April 2017

Press Release: Auckland Kindergarten Association

Auckland Kindergarten Association welcomes release of revised Te Whāriki

The Auckland Kindergarten Association (AKA) has welcome the Government's release today (12 April) of an update to New Zealand's early childhood education curriculum, Te Whāriki.

Association CEO Tanya Harvey called the update of the twenty-one-year-old curriculum 'timely', and said the new version would improve outcomes for New Zealand children.

She said she was pleased that both bi-culturalism and an holistic approach remained at the core of the revised document.

The 118 learning outcomes of the old curriculum presented kindergartens with an unwieldy proliferation of guidelines, she said. And the reduction to 20 would clarify the progress of children for parents and whanau.

The improved links to the primary school curriculum, in the new Te Whāriki, would improve transitions for children between kindergarten and school, Ms Harvey said.

The next challenge, however, was for government 'to ensure the new version of the curriculum is actually adopted in all corners of our very diverse early childhood education sector'.

She said she hoped 'very much' that the Government would provide sufficient funding for the professional learning and development necessary to make this happen.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1704/S00141/te-whariki-update-needs-pd-to-back-it-up.htm>

Te Whāriki update needs PD to back it up

Wednesday: 12 April 2017

Press Release: NZEI – Te Riu Roa

NZEI members are heartened that the mana of Te Whāriki has been upheld in a major update today and we will now focus on ensuring educators get the professional development they need to use the updated curriculum to help children learn.

"Te Whāriki is a globally regarded early childhood education curriculum which is hugely important to educators in New Zealand and the world over," NZEI executive member and kindergarten head teacher Virginia Oakly said.

"Our position remains the same; the people best placed to articulate child progress in early childhood teacher-led services are qualified ECE teachers drawing upon current pedagogy.

"Te Whāriki shapes all our work with children in early childhood education. For us, any changes to Te Whāriki are hugely significant.

"It's great that the Education Minister has acknowledged the need for professional development to help in the roll out of the curriculum.

"However we are not convinced that \$4 million allows every educator the resources and time they need to really understand the new document, and we will talk to our members further about this.

"There are still questions about the reduction down to 20 learning outcomes and what this means for our place in the international education community as leaders of ECE pedagogy and guardians of Te Whāriki.

"However, alignment between the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa appears strengthened with the articulation of those connections via "the weaving."

"It's heartening to see that most of the sector feedback has been taken on board. We would like to recognise the contributions of the original authors through the editing process.

"It is also good to see the positive curriculum-based statements about assessment and evaluation particularly at a time when global assessment trends are promoting a narrowing of assessment practice.

"The inclusive education content honours the diversity of tamariki and acknowledges Te Ao Maori views," Ms Oakly said.

Attesting salary levels of qualified teachers to access higher ECE funding bands

From: Te Rito Maioha / ECNZ – 7 April 2017

In light of discussions our Membership Advisor Sophie Hamilton has been having with the resourcing division of the Ministry of Education (MoE), we wish to bring to the attention of our members the fact that when attesting salary levels to access higher ECE funding bands the MoE expect short-term relievers to be factored into attestations. The MoE do not recognise appendix C of the Early Childhood Education Collective Agreement of Aotearoa New Zealand (ECECA). Please see our advice below:

To be able to access the higher ECE funding bands, a service must attest that their teachers are being paid at least at the current entry levels in the Early Childhood Education Collective Agreement of Aotearoa New Zealand (ECECA). Higher funding rates are only available to services that agree to pay all primary and ECE qualified and certificated teachers employed by their service at minimum salary levels, as per the chart below. The MoE use these minimum salary levels for ALL qualified and certificated teachers including short-term and long-term relief teachers. To verify this, auditors will need to see evidence of the actual salary rates.

<https://education.govt.nz/early-childhood/running-an-ece-service/employing-ece-staff/attestation/>

Making food safety rules work for your childcare centre

From: He Pānui Kōhungahunga – The Early Learning Bulletin – 20th April 2017

By now, early childhood education (ECE) centres me ngā kōhanga reo that cook meals or prepare food like sandwiches or salads should have applied to register under the Food Act. The deadline was on 31 March.

Over 500 centres around New Zealand are already operating under the food safety law, and many more are having their registrations processed at the moment. MPI has been working to make the process as easy as possible. They've created a web page for ECE providers which lets you check if you need to register and how to go about it. Read more on Education.govt.nz.

From: Ministry of Primary Industries website

Who needs to register?

Early childhood education (ECE) centres or kōhanga reo that cook meals or prepare food – like sandwiches or salads – need to register under national programme 2.

You don't need to register if:

- all the food is brought in by kids from home (for example in lunch boxes)
 - you only serve fruit or pre-packaged snacks that don't need to be kept cold (like muffins or crackers)
 - you prepare food with the kids only as part of the curriculum
 - you run a home-based service
 - you don't charge enrolment fees (or otherwise charge for the food).
-

REPORTS/RESEARCH/ARTICLES

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

A Compliance Lesson for the Education Sector

From: Liz Leamy, Health and Safety at Work Consultant via Kurtovich Consulting – 9th May 2017

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 “HSWA” has been in place now for just over a year. Many in the ECE sector are still uncertain about what they must do to comply under the new legislation. We have had our first indication from WorkSafe, and the example comes from the education sector.

Four days after HSWA came into force, an incident occurred in an Auckland school and the outcome of the WorkSafe investigation is relevant to the ECE sector.

Briefly, the school has students ranging from 3 through to 18 years old. During a school production of Sweeney Todd, put on by the College, with students as musicians and actors, 2 student actors received, as described by Worksafe “serious lacerations to their throats”.

At the time, the school down played the incident, rumours and misinformation circulated in the press, and in the education sector. On April 5th 2017, WorkSafe announced that it had accepted an “Enforceable Undertaking” from the school.

This is important for us for two reasons, it shows us how Worksafe intends to use the new tool of Enforceable Undertaking as it applies to the education sector and, how stringent they are going to be on the person conducting a business or undertaking “PCBU” requesting the Enforceable Undertaking.

An Enforceable Undertaking is an “enforceable” agreement between the PCBU and WorkSafe. The PCBU must admit they have breached HSWA and request the undertaking. If the Enforceable Undertaking is not complied with, WorkSafe is able to prosecute the PCBU.

For a proposed Enforceable Undertaking to be accepted, WorkSafe requires that the terms of the undertaking promote the objects or purposes of the health and safety legislation for the benefit of the workers and/or workplace, the wider industry or sector, and the community.

In this situation, upon WorkSafe accepting the undertaking, the school made an immediate statement to the press, saying:

“The school used real razor blades in the shows, which had been filed down and wrapped in duct tape, foam and silver paper”. The school has apologised, after a WorkSafe investigation found:

- the school had not implemented a system to adequately identify hazards that could give rise to reasonably foreseeable risks to health and safety arising out of the production
- not implementing adequate control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks of sustaining injuries
- not establishing an effective incident and investigation reporting system for incidents
- not providing adequate training or instructions to students on the use of razor blades necessary to protect them from risks to their health and safety

Further, the school Trust Board said "the school accepts that it should have done more to acknowledge the seriousness of what happened immediately after the accident. The injuries were not minor. The injuries were significant and life-threatening."

WorkSafe said, "Reparation will be paid to those involved as the school works on a "restorative justice process" with the victims of the offending. We have carefully considered the impact of this incident and the wishes of the victims and their families. The school Trust Board has taken responsibility and accountability for its breach of the law and is taking a number of actions to address the issues that led to this serious incident. Through this enforceable undertaking, a range of steps will be completed."

What can we learn from this?

1. The systems and processes we rely on to manage the risk of work related harm are **essential** for keeping our staff, children and others safe and healthy in our centres. The systems must be comprehensive, in place at all times, and used by everyone
2. We must always ensure we have a solid review and monitoring system for our risk management, the PCBU must ask the hard question "Is this enough? Should we do more? How risky is the risk of harm in this situation?"
3. Always place the management of risk of harm as high priority, include training and induction as part of your risk management system
4. Keep doing what you do, providing learning experiences for children, but absolutely know that you are managing the risk of harm.
