

# Handy hints for making education accessible to members



## **Change the Centre culture**

Promote education as something positive and a choice. We choose to participate in the education programme because it enriches the learning opportunities for our tamariki; it challenges us to grow as educators and learners; it gives us skills we can transfer into future employment and community opportunities. Not because 'we have to do it' to be members of Playcentre.

## **Utilise people who are inspirational**

The best education officers and teaching staff are those who are passionate about education themselves and can promote it positively. No experience is necessary to become a Centre education officer – just a love of learning and willingness to encourage others. Knowledge and experience is essential for teaching staff, but without inspiration it is meaningless.

## **Create synergy**

Create learning opportunities for trainees to work through the programme together and create their own support networks. Make workshops and support sessions enjoyable times, where trainees come together to have fun learning together.

## **Consider the timing of workshops**

For many, daytime workshops are preferable as they don't cut into whānau time. In a Playcentre context this also means providing tamariki with fun-filled sessions so that they are having too much fun to want to sit around in a workshop. For trainees who can't focus with children around, an evening or weekend workshop may work better.

## **Be available and open to support trainees with special support needs**

This reaches beyond the narrowly-defined 'special needs' to include wider whānau needs – how do we cater for single parents? Shift workers? Families in shared care arrangements? Working parents? Put support systems in place so that the education team is aware of potential barriers to education.

## **Celebrate!**

Regularly acknowledge the support 'behind the scenes' from partners and whānau. Recognise the accomplishments of trainees, the efforts of teaching staff, and express gratitude to the volunteers that make it happen.

*Kara Daly – Playcentre Aotearoa*