

Media Release

24 September 2007

Is home-based education under the radar?

“Home-based early childhood education and care is under rated, under valued and under the radar in the early childhood sector in New Zealand,” said Robyn Reid, Barnardos New Zealand specialist adviser, early childhood, during a workshop at the 2007 Early Childhood Convention in Rotorua today.

“While the value of learning in more formal settings such as centres has been well documented, learning in home-based settings is not always recognised. Perhaps this has given rise to the belief that to be learning, children should be in a large group setting.”

Our review of existing literature on early childhood curriculum and learning, as well as experience, challenges this view,” said Robyn, who presented the workshop with colleagues Sandy Cassells and Penelope Janes.

“What we have found is that children learn through authentic every day experiences in the home and local community.

“A walk to the local library, for example, becomes a rich learning experience, with the chance to explore the insect and plant life en route, recognise numbers on letter boxes, talk with the librarian, discover the joys of reading and find out how books can be borrowed.”

“But more than this, children benefit from being part of a small group, which means they develop warm and genuine relationships with the other children and their caregiver. Parents are respected as an integral part of their child’s learning. They are also supported to be great parents and to enjoy their children’s learning.”

“There has been some good research on learning in this sector, but more could be done,” said Robyn. “As the largest community provider of home-based education and care, Barnardos is in a great position to find out more about children’s learning in this environment.”

“We’ve already begun asking our KidStart Caregivers for their views and will be extending our study to KidStart Visiting Teachers and parents.

Nearly 2800 children are enrolled with more than 700 Caregivers in Barnardos KidStart service.”

“Central to our work is our commitment to Barnardos’ guiding principle ‘ko ngā tamariki i te tuatahi, children come first.”

ENDS

For more details contact:
Robyn Reid
Early Childhood Specialist Adviser
Barnardos New Zealand
Cell phone: 021 74 6178
www.barnardos.org.nz

Notes:

Barnardos is the largest community provider of early childhood education and care in New Zealand. Last year, nearly 2800 under six year olds were enrolled in its KidStart home-based learning and care services, 1150 in its 23 Early Learning Centres and 30 in Number One Nannies (in Wellington only). Barnardos set up its first centre in 1972 and its home-based service in 1978. KidStart and the Early Learning Centres offer 20 hours free a week early childhood and care for three and four year olds.

As specialist advisers, early childhood, Robyn Reid and her colleagues ensure Barnardos early childhood education and care services follow best practice in line with Government policy and standards. Learning programmes across all services are developed in line with Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum.