Play spaces and children’s well-being in Aotearoa New Zealand:

King Street Nature Kindergarten Programme
– A journey to self-discovery.

The most creative act a person can undertake is the act of creating yourself.
--Deepak Chopra

Jan Beatson
What is well-being?
Who is responsible for well-being?
What image are we bearing when we think about well-being?
Te Whāriki aspirations

competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, M.O.E (2006)

How are we empowering our children to be active members who participate in the decisions about their health and wellbeing

Seeing children as contributing and active agents in their own learning and in the creation of circumstances that promote their health and well-being is vital, (Rose, Gilbert and Richard, 2016).

Rogoff (2003) emphasises on creating own socio-cultural context vs being the recipients of external socio-cultural context

Connections to Mother Earth

Pere (1991):
Te Whāriki

The strand of Well-Being - Mana Atua

- based on the principle of Empowerment
- enhanced sense of self-worth, identity, confidence, and enjoyment
- development of self-control, self-esteem and independence
- Holistic Development
- Family and Relationships

Durie (2006)- Hauora
Conformity vs Growth
Recognised as a component of Quality of Life, and is denoted as people’s affective and cognitive evaluations of their lives (Diener 2000, p.1).

Subjective well-being has three distinct components,

• life satisfaction,
• positive experiences
• negative experiences (Diener 1984),
Young children show remarkable skills and major responsibilities throughout the world. They are able to make decisions about their own learning.

We cotton wool, keep them safe and “teach” them the skills we feel that they will need (Canella, 1997).
Walk the Talk

Discussing and negotiating safety strategies

Conversations
Nature brings about both intense positive and negative emotional experiences in children (Myers, 2012).
Boundaries
Open Ended Resources – Thinking for Yourself
Challenge

Philosophy of protection vs philosophy of resilience
Culture of zero-risk childhood
Experiencing Challenges and Frustrations
Accomplishing Challenges
Managing Risks
Anthony’s mum, Tuk visited our Nature Kindergarten and showed us the Thai way of making rice on the fire.
Elements

Fire

Water

Rocks
Pedagogy

- Observation
- Conversation
- Time and Space
- Revisiting
- Co-construction
- Active Listening
- Nature Based
- Whanau
- Discussion and Negotiation
- Democracy

- Dealing with Uncertainties
- Tuakana-Teina (Learning from each other)
- Looking after each other
- Acknowledging, accepting difference
- Ako - Co-learner, Co-researcher
Anthony’s mum, Tuk visited our Nature Kindergarten and showed us the Thai way of making rice on the fire.
"Let them look at the mountains and the stars up above. Let them look at the beauty of the waters and the trees and flowers on earth. They will then begin to think, and to think is the beginning of a real education."
David Polis
Freedom to Explore, Enquire and Engage
Self-Belief
Reflections from our Journey

• Accepting physical challenges
• Dealing with uncertainties
• Children as leaders
• Emotional resilience
• Sharing cultural knowledge
• Self-belief
• Reassurance
• Self acceptance
• Authentic positive self-image
• Can-do attitude
Well-Being

Well-Being is a journey, a journey of discovery the state of being and basking in it.
“As a teacher, for me, working with the children in the outdoors has changed the way I see my role as teacher and children’s role as learners. Having the freedom of time in the outdoor environment has allowed me to truly observe children’s learning and to realise that given the right environment, children are really good at driving their own learning. My teaching practice has completely changed and I now see myself as firstly an observer, secondly a facilitator and thirdly I sit comfortably alongside children as a learner.” Jan Taylor
Thanks

Our thanks to the dedicated Teachers, the Parents, their wonderful Children of Play and Learn Early Education- King Street and our wider Community.

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