

## **SUPPORT OF NEW MUMS**

Information from the Little Treasures Survey

*The survey of 466 mothers with babies up to six months old showed that:*

- 66% of first time mums said they had breastfeeding problems
- 22% of first time mums would have liked to stay longer in hospital
- 25% of first time mums said they felt the number of visits from Plunket and midwives was not enough
- Only 16% of new mums who tried to call Plunket line got through on the first attempt

With the unequivocal message that breast is best coming at us via dozens of different avenues, the desire to breastfeed is there. Ministry of Health research shows that 94% of new mothers give breastfeeding a go, but these figures drop rapidly. At 5-6 weeks only 66% of mothers are fully breastfeeding and by three months that figure drops to about 50%.

*According to the Little Treasures survey, the main reasons for this were:*

- Inconsistent advice about breastfeeding in hospital
- Not enough time in hospital to get breastfeeding sorted out
- Not enough support when they get home

Most New Zealand women have their babies in hospital so it's here that they first try to breastfeed. Given that breastfeeding specialists say that most problems arise from incorrect positioning of the baby on the breast, those first hours and days of support - or lack of it - can have a critical effect on progress. The Little Treasures survey found that 11% of first-time mums and 21% of the rest said that when it came to breastfeeding they did not receive helpful advice in hospital. These results echo concerns expressed in a Ministry of Health maternity services satisfaction survey released last year, involving almost 3000 women. In that, 30% of women said they felt hospital staff or their LMC were too busy to attend to their needs and 23% didn't get consistent advice about feeding.

Given the "breast is best" message you could be forgiven for thinking you would be encouraged to stay in hospital for as long as it takes to recover from the birth, get breastfeeding underway, and feel confident about leaving with your new baby. The Little Treasures survey found that the average length of stay for first time mothers was 4 days but 24% stayed for two days or less. Repeat mothers averaged just less than 3 days but 46% left in two days or less. 22% of first time mothers and 17% of repeat mothers wanted to stay longer. By the time they went home more than a third of first-time mothers and nearly a quarter of mums with other children did not feel they had breastfeeding established.

It comes down to economics for hospitals. Some midwives believe hospital isn't the place for well women and babies, that new mothers should be cherished and looked after and nurtured for 6-8 weeks in their home but this is a long way from reality for many women. Family are a

huge support for most of us, but they are not there all the time and they are not breastfeeding experts. Many rely on the professional support of midwives, Plunket nurses and family centres. The survey revealed that many feel the amount of postnatal care isn't enough. A quarter of first time mothers and 17% of repeat mothers felt the number of visits they had from midwives and Plunket nurses weren't enough.

A new mother is entitled to between 5-10 visits by her LMC in the first 6 weeks, more if clinically needed. Plunket should make one home visit by 6 weeks and another before 3 months.

Advice: if you don't get enough visits, complain. Your LMC is being paid to provide them. In fact, she should be available 24/7 to provide phone advice or attendance if required.

### **PLUNKET (Plunketline 0800 933 922)**

Plunket sees 85% of all new babies in NZ. The services Plunket offers to new mothers include home visits, Plunket Karitane Family Centres, Plunket Line and Parenting education.

There is a new Pepe programme, which is still in its implementation stage. It's a programme that runs antenatally (stage one) covering issues up to 6 weeks and postnatally (stage 2, covering 6 weeks-1 year), focusing on child development and parenting skills. It grew from parental demand, parents wanted to know more about what happens after the birth in the first 6 weeks. They are looking to extend the parent education programme to stage 3 (toddlers) and stage 4 (preschoolers).

### **ANNABELLE'S RECIPES**

#### **Mini Cheese Muffins**

- 1 egg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 cups flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 cup cooked bacon, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 2 cups Mainland Grated Tasty Cheddar cheese
- 1 1/2 cups Meadow Fresh Balance milk
- Extra cheese for garnish, we used 100g Mainland Blue Vein, crumbled

#### **Method:**

Lightly beat the egg, salt and olive oil and place to one side. Sift flour and baking powder into a large bowl. Mix in cheese, parsley and bacon bits into the flour mixture. Make a well in the centre and add the egg/milk mixture. Mix together gently - do not over-mix. Spoon into small muffin tins - sprinkle with extra blue cheese.

Bake 190degC until golden brown - allow 15-18 minutes.  
Once cooked, turn out of tins and cover with a cloth.

*Makes 36 small muffins*

\* When these muffins have cooled, slit them 3/4 open and place a small slice of Mainland Brie inside the muffin. Reheat in a hot oven till the cheese melts - this will only take a few minutes and you have an irresistible nibble for your friends and family.

Cheese puffs are part of the New Zealand tradition of baking. These muffins are a variation on the same theme and make a great, economical addition to your next party or child's lunch box. They freeze well. A great way to get your kids to eat cheese, and increase their intake of calcium and protein - two of the building blocks for young bodies.

## **SCHOOL TRANSITIONS**

We are unique in NZ in that our primary schools are generally small, especially "full" primary schools, which go up to Year 8. This accentuates the change if children are going on to a large secondary school. In NZ half our Year 8 students are at intermediates and the other half are in full primary schools.

There is the view that our Year 8 pupils may not be getting enough specialist teacher access early enough. Ponsonby Intermediate is the only intermediate in NZ that rotates the core as well as peripheral subjects. The students have a home teacher, and then go to specialist teachers for all subjects. This means they get an introduction to secondary school timetabling with a primary school nurturing culture. Avondale Intermediate has specialist teaching for non-core subjects.

There are about six middle schools/junior highs in New Zealand and a new one is under construction in Appleby Rd, Albany, which will feed to a new senior college. There is also one in Hamilton and one in Christchurch.

Some secondary schools go to a lot of trouble to assist the transition - visiting the feeder intermediates, placing students in classes that will suit them - with friends, or separate from friends.

Initial analyses from students suggest that parents and maybe teachers inadvertently set kids up for a tougher time than they need to. Parents can actually create fear in kids; "You'd better pull your socks up improve your work ethic or you won't do well at secondary school."

Another issue of transition is from primary to single sex secondary school. The transition can be more difficult.

## **The Ministry of Education on Transitioning**

Earlier this year Waikato University was commissioned by the Ministry of Education to review international research done of the issue of Transitioning between primary and secondary schools.

The following are chapter summaries from a report by the research division of Waikato University for the MOE titled: Transition to secondary school -A Literature Review.

### **Summary Chapter 1, Academic Attainment**

Following transition to secondary school, students tend to suffer decreases in academic achievement.

The age of transition differs between countries; it appears to be the change that makes the difference, not the age at which pupils make the transition. Any transition may lead to a fall in achievement.

Academic attainment in the first year at secondary school seems to be related to students' decreased interest in academic activities and an increase in non-academic activities in the middle years.

Disillusionment at the lack of academic challenge has often been reported.

Few steps appear to have been taken by schools to address the drop in academic achievement.

Social and economic conditions need to permit school and home environments to foster a literate culture.

### **Summary Chapter 2, Social Adjustment**

Generally, New Zealand schools have transition programmes that handle the social aspects of transition well. Prior visits, orientation programmes and peer support programmes are common.

Family support, school responsiveness and student involvement in school and community are important in recovery from low performance or low commitment to school.

Transition is stressful - having adequate information and social support activities that help students to form friendship networks are crucial factors in coping.

Increased self-esteem can aid academic motivation.

Provision of choice can enhance student self-regulation.

Involvement in sports, arts and other activities correlate with academic success.

### **Summary Chapter 3, Linkage Between Schools**

Transition programmes that emphasise orientation and support are common.

Continuity of curriculum suffers on transition. Few secondary schools have sustained linking arrangements focused on the learning progression of individual children.

Little use is made of standardised achievement measures. Many secondary teachers prefer to apply their own entry assessment tests.

Teaching expectations often differ between primary/intermediate and secondary school.

Previous experience or achievement is often disregarded by secondary schools.

### **Summary Chapter 4 Organisational Issues**

Some studies commented that the comparatively nurturing environment and child-centred approach to teaching offered by primary schools meant that transition to secondary schools was stressful.

The difficulties some students have in transferring from the primary to secondary school structure have been found to be temporary.

Prior to transition, students need to be held more responsible for their learning, to be taught about strategies for learning on their own, and to be provided with a more challenging curriculum, with clear goals of academic achievement.

Holding high expectations of students increases achievement.

Progression between schools needs a continuous curriculum, which allows the positioning of students according to the level of their learning development.

Low achieving students may benefit most from reformed school infrastructure that emphasizes personal support for students, parent involvement, interdisciplinary team teaching and developing smaller schools within schools.

Altering age span of schools does not appear to influence attainment.

Well co-ordinated transition arrangements contribute to successful transition, and decrease adjustment time.

### **Summary Chapter 5, Pupils perception**

Primary students view transition positively.

Most students and parents in a New Zealand situation appeared to be happy with their secondary schools.

Pupil anxiety has often been reported but recent research suggests that it is less severe than previously reported. Most children adjust to secondary school quickly.

Some studies show that many students are not sufficiently challenged by secondary school academic work in the year or two following transition. Many students found secondary school workloads less than they expected.

Students sometimes felt that their previous achievement was undervalued at secondary level.

Better sequencing of curriculum across schools may give students a sense of continuity.

After transition, students' perceptions of the subjects they study are influenced by their relationship with the teachers of those subjects.

The school affects the extent to which the students see themselves as being socially as well as academically successful.

At-risk students need intervention prior to transition.

### **Summary Chapter 7, Socio-Economic Issues**

SES is a factor that may lead to poor achievement. Secondary schools with low SES students generally have programmes in place to support students at risk.

Students from low SES families have lower reading scores than children from high SES families. Reading is indicative of overall achievement.

Several initiatives have attempted to raise the achievement of low SES students, e.g. AIMHI, AbeL.

Clear goals and positive feedback have been found to help students in low-decile multi-cultural secondary schools.

Family support is linked to achievement after transition and the influence of effective parents is cumulative.

Where the student's home environment is aligned with that of the school. Parental support is more effective and student achievement is higher.

Social advantages tend to compound. Full transition programmes are more available to, and benefit more, middle to upper SES groups.

New Zealand students in single-sex schools tend to achieve more highly than their co-educational counterparts - single-sex schools tend to attract students from higher social classes.

Students from lower socio-economic families may be advantaged by attending schools with significant numbers of middle-class students.

Lower SES families are less likely to be able to attend a highly regarded school.

The negative effect of school size is more pronounced on low socio-economic students.

### **Summary Chapter 8, Gender Differences**

Gender differences have been and, although to a lesser extent, still are related to subject area.

The experience of transition may be affected by subject choice on entry to secondary school.

Attendance at single-sex or co-educational schools does not appear to have significant effects on achievement once SES factors have been taken into account.

At the time of transition girls' attitudes towards teachers and learning are different from those of boys. The tendency to 'teach the boys' because they need more help or make more demands is considered unfair and exploitative by some researchers.

As a result of the findings of this research the MoE has decided to commission New Zealand research and below is an outline of the project.

### **Information Sheet: A Study of Students' Transition from Primary to Secondary Schooling**

#### *Background and Purpose of the Research*

The international research literature shows that the transition from primary to secondary schooling can be a stressful time for students. It also shows that while many schools have positive initiatives in place to ease the transition for students, there is still a lot to learn about the complexities of this transition point. This is especially so in the New Zealand context.

For this reason, the Research Division of the Ministry of Education is about to undertake a semi-longitudinal study which will follow a diverse group of Year 8 students from their last term at primary school through Year 9, and on into their second year at secondary school. The overall aim of the research is to identify key variables that seem to facilitate or hinder a smooth transition for students between the two school sectors in terms of their;

- (a) Overall learning and achievement
- (b) Social development/adjustment
- (c) Development (or maintenance) of positive attitudes towards school, learning and achieving well.

### **BOOK: Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen, by Dyan Sheldon (age 12 )**

"Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen", by Dyan Sheldon, is an evocative, funny read for girls of 12 and over. It captures some teenage traumas very accurately while still maintaining a lovely level of innocence.

There's a huge, flamboyant central character in Lola, who reads like Anne of Green Gables for the 21st century, and a poor hapless friend who gets pulled into all sorts of scrapes as they chase pop-stars around New York and work their way through Lola's web of fantasies and lies.

There's plenty to laugh along with and moments of real sympathy. This book is being turned into a film (probably along the same lines as the Princess Diaries), and it's very easy to see why. But be sure to enjoy the book first.

Book reviews by The Children's Book Shop.

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.kiddonet.com/> (7-12 years)

clicks onto Kiddonet Junior (3-6 years)

This is an American site and full of awesome information and entertainment for children aged 7 to 12. Its mission is to offer kids high quality content and web tools to create, learn, play and communicate safely.

You can create a homepage, play games, communicate with other children, do artistic things. There are comics to make and read, you can print off stickers, bookmarks, cards and invitations. Kzoo has heaps of information about wild and pet animals, in the homework section you can either ask a question, or be put in touch with other sites.

Kiddonet Junior is a special site for 3-6 year olds.

Websites reviewed by the Children and Teens department of Auckland City Library

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The Child Crisis Team of trained therapists, psychologists and social workers at the Domestic Violence Centre work with children witnessing domestic violence. They only work within Auckland city (not North Shore, Manukau or Waitakere). Even though it is Auckland city only, the centre is the biggest in the country.

Police refer incidences of domestic violence to the CCT when children are involved. They get around 100 referrals a week from Auckland Police, which they believe is a small percentage of actual family violence. If there is a protection order/non-molestation order out against the father the children are automatically assessed.

The CCT Co-ordinator extends the net wider than just physical violence as the only expression of domestic violence. She defines domestic violence as behaviour that controls a household, so much so that people can't say, do or think what they want to i.e. no friends are allowed to visit, financial control is exerted or the presence of fear.

**The procedure:**

Domestic violence is reported to police. A Protection Order is taken out against the father. This is the jurisdiction of the Family court. The court contracts the CCT team, which is part of the DVC to assist/assess the children.

A trained therapist sees the children for 4 sessions of 1 1/2 hours, which occur over a 4-8 week period. It is believed that only 18% of those eligible take it up.

Protection orders taken out against the father are often issued at this stage and can be an issued after discussion with the mother and counsellors. This is under the jurisdiction of the Family Court. Counselling is available to mothers and children regardless of whether they have a protection order against the father.

The CCT service has been a pilot programme funded largely by the ASB Trust. The Ministry of Justice paid for its evaluation. It has decided to fund the project further through its CPU - Crime Prevention Unit.

### **The Domestic Violence Centre:**

The Domestic Violence Centre is an Incorporated Society formed in 1990 to provide a telephone crisis line and referral service for people affected by domestic violence. It now coordinates statutory and community agencies in the justice sector. In 1994, the agency broadened its focus and added SAFTINET (Safer Auckland Families Through Intervention Networking) to its name.

At the beginning of 1996, the Domestic Violence Centre was contracted by the Health Funding Authority to provide a callout service, in partnership with the Auckland City Police and hospitals. More recently, education programmes for the Auckland community have become part of the core business of the agency. This now includes a men's stopping violence programme. The agency has seven staff and approximately 60 volunteers.

Funding comes from many sources, including the Health Funding Authority, Community Funding Agency, New Zealand Lottery Grants Board, Auckland City Council, and various charitable trusts.