



Ray of Hope

the Little's Lobby newsletter



Safety is everybody's responsibility

Sue Campbell, Plunket's National Child Safety Advisor, offers some tips on protecting young children from fall related injuries.

Falls are the leading cause of serious injury in New Zealand pre-schoolers. Young children fall from one level to another, often off furniture such as sofas and beds. They also fall down stairs and topple over as they learn to walk on unsteady legs!

SUPERVISION IS THE KEY!

Don't leave babies unattended on any surface they could fall from: they can easily roll off beds, sofas or kitchen benches.

Use stair gates: Many households where children are injured falling down stairs don't have stair gates. The gate design should ensure the gate can't be left open by mistake.

Nursery furniture: Make a habit of always using the harness in items such as high chairs and strollers. Place cots away from windows. Plunket discourages baby walker use.

Rules about climbing and use of furniture: Ideally, children Little's Lobby is proudly supported by:



Commissioner for Children the Hon. Roger McClay feels right at home in the Grand Hall of Parliament Buildings, Wellington. On the right Tino Pereira represented the Pacific Island community. Crai

Littlies Lobby Six Key Messages

- ?? Ko ā tātou tamariki ki mua
Children must come first
- ?? Me mātua whiwhi tīmatanga tika ā tātou tamariki
Children must have the right start
- ?? Me mātua poipoi ā tātou tamariki kia ora rawa ai
Children must be nurtured to thrive
- ?? Me mātua whiwhi tiaki pai ā tātou tamariki
Children must have quality care
- ?? Me mātua whakamau ā tātou tamariki i te kainga
Children must be secure at home
- ?? Me mātua reri mō te kura ā tātou tamariki i te rima tau
Children must be school ready by five



Joining the Lobby
Visit

www.littlieslobby.org.nz

click the membership button and fill out the simple form or free phone

0800 4 LOBBY

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily that of



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Welcome aboard!

"It is gratifying that the Little's Lobby is generating a good deal of interest, and to see a real desire to put children first. We now have over 100 members and have had more than 5,000 visitors to the website.

This newsletter and the website are vehicles to obtain feedback as well as a forum to debate issues that are important to children and families.

Our first major event - the Parliamentary Children's Caucus breakfast - is to be held on April 9. Youth Court Judge Andrew Becroft

Coming, ready or not

Dr. Keith Ballard, Professor of Education, University of Otago

I attended the Little's Lobby launch in Dunedin. It was a marvellously noisy and lively occasion. Advocating for children is important, but I cannot agree with one of the key messages promoted by the Lobby. This is the proposal that "Children must be school ready by five".

It would seem a good idea that children should begin school with a sense of wonder and excitement. What they have learned at home and in other settings should be of value, and be valued, in the classroom.

But the idea that a child must be "ready" for school carries with it questions about who decides what the child is to know and

"My dictionary confirms that lobbying is in effect mounting a campaign to influence the views or actions of others.

The Little's Lobby is really a movement to do just that. We need to make everyone aware of the uniqueness of our babies and toddlers and knowledgeable about their place in our society.

Decision makers know that they will be the target of lobbying on a wide range of issues and from a wide range of interests.

It's great that we have now officially, a growing hand of people who want to

"Children must be school ready by five"

But are schools ready for them? The "Little's Lobby" has sought to unite those with a commitment to promoting the well being of children and families. The intent of the final message (above) is to give priority to ensuring children are supported and encouraged in their learning before they reach school. We want children starting school with an appetite to continue their learning.

We have however received feedback from a number of people that the message isn't quite right. In particular the concept of "being school ready" has different connotations for different people. It can imply failure on the part of a child if they are not perceived as being "ready". It can be seen to ignore the importance of school's being ready for the children coming to them. It can imply that 5 is the age that learning begins.

We want to ensure the messages do reflect the aspirations that we all hold



Littlies Lobby response - suggested rewording of the key message

Littlies Lobby is keen to encourage a public dialogue and debate around our key messages and are open to the prospect of refining these messages to more accurately reflect the needs of children.

Based upon feedback recently received regarding one our sixth key messages, we submit the following amendments for discussion:

"Children must have the best learning environments before five"

"Children must have the best chance when starting school at age five"

"Children must be well prepared on school entry"

And, amended text:

Children learn from the moment of birth. Children's brains develop best when they are stimulated by language and positive experiences in a safe and learning environment. Children love learning whether it occurs at home or in an early childhood education centre. All children have a right to
Littlies Lobby is proudly supported by:

Coming, ready or not

(continued from front page)

The issue of possible exclusion does not apply only to children with disabilities. For example, children from minority cultural backgrounds and children living in poverty may also come to school with knowledge and values that are not the same as those of the majority. Are they to be told that they are not ready? Who will decide what skills and values will constitute readiness?

These issues are especially important in New Zealand where we have pursued economic and social policies that knowingly create significant poverty and where we provide limited state support for families. Thirty-two per cent of our children now live in poverty and 72% of single parent families live below the poverty line. As a community we have created conditions that cause many of our children to live with poor nutrition and poor health. Alongside this our commercial market model of schooling has created state schools increasingly divided along socio-economic and ethnic lines, raising the question of what kind of school a child should be ready for?

I agree that we should help children to be ready to face each day and each new experience. Policies that support children



Littlies Lobby launch, Auckland, December 2002

Contacting the Littlies Lobby

Littlies Lobby is keen to encourage a public dialogue and debate around its key messages, and is open to the prospect of refining these messages in response to differing points of view. We have a bulletin board on our website specifically designed

Parliamentary Children's Caucus

At the Wellington launch in Parliament, Plunket New Zealand President, Pam Murray called for the creation of a Parliamentary Children's Caucus.

The first Parliamentary Children's Caucus Breakfast will be held in the **Beehive on April 9**. The event will be co-hosted by Labour MP Steve Chadwick and National MP Katherine Rich. The first guest speaker will be Principal Youth Court Judge A J Becroft.

Discussion and prioritisation of the issues affecting New Zealand children will be the key objectives for the first meeting.

To date over 250 people have been invited to attend, with all places now filled.
Littlies Lobby Coordinator



Jude Dobson in Auckland at the launch of Littlies Lobby late last year. Jude supported the belief that investment in the early years brings long-term

Media love the Lobby

The launches received positive nation-wide media attention, from the front page of the Dominion Post, to articles in the Press, Otago Daily Times and various regional papers. National radio stations covered the events through hourly bulletins and followed up with many interviews.

Littlies Lobby's partner ACP Media has released a full-page article in their most recent About Kids

Umbrellas available

The distinctive Littlies Lobby children's umbrella symbolises our commitment to the many and diverse organisations in New Zealand, who focus on the well-being of children.

Blue represents the future – the investment in our children's early years ensuring that they always come first;

Green is the colour of health – representing the quality care our children deserve;

Red is for safety and our commitment to children being secure at home;



Littlies Lobby umbrellas serve a greater purpose than just protecting from the sun or rain. They are a symbol in New Zealand of the many people Littlies Lobby is proudly supported by: