



The Champion Centre  
T A M A R I K I   T O I O R A

**Annual Report  
of the  
Christchurch Early Intervention Trust  
CC22708**

**Building Futures for Children with Special Needs  
July 2013-June 2014**

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### Our Mission Statement

The Champion Centre is committed to providing high quality family and whanāu based early intervention services for children/tamariki with multi faceted developmental delay. In partnership with our local runanga (Te Ngai Tuahuriri), The Champion Centre will educate about early intervention and act with parents/mātua of children/tamariki with developmental delay as advocates for adequate and appropriate community services for them and their children/tamariki.

**Chairperson's Report**  
**For the financial Year 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014**

Carol Bellette

Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the  
Christchurch Early Intervention Trust



As I know from personal experience as a parent of a child who has attended the Champion Centre, there is huge uncertainty for parents when they first discover their child has special needs. Just coping with everyday life can be a struggle initially. With the support of the Champion Centre you adjust and find the inner strength to walk a different journey with your child. Over time your hopes and dreams for your child will evolve. Later, when you look back over your child's journey, you will remember each hard earned milestone your child achieved.

Our talented team of professional therapists and staff work with children with a wide range of special needs including premature babies, children with Down syndrome, children on the autistic spectrum, and children with developmental delays for a wide range of other reasons.

The government funding we receive enables us to provide core basic services, and the Canterbury DHB currently subsidises the cost of our premises at Burwood. Our core basic services include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, early intervention teaching, education support, social work and whānau support. However none of these services is fully funded by our government grants and must be topped up with private funding.

Moreover, to achieve our vision of "building futures for children with special needs" our holistic approach also includes a music programme and a computer supported learning programme, neither of which attracts government funding.

We therefore rely on donations to fund all aspects of our services.

We are grateful to our many donors for your ongoing support. The financial assistance you so kindly donate enables us to continue providing a holistic support service to our families.

I would like to thank our dedicated staff and my fellow board members for their ongoing support and commitment to ensuring the ongoing success of the Champion Centre.

## **Meet the Board of Trustees of the Christchurch Early Intervention Trust**

### **Carol Bellette (Chairperson)**

Carol is a finance professional with governance experience in both the not-for-profit and commercial sectors. Her current role is Group General Manager Shared services for Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu. Carol is also a board member of Leadership New Zealand and on the Cathedral Grammar School Board of Trustees. Carol has been associated with the Christchurch Early Intervention Trust since 2006 as both a parent and a Trust Board member.

### **Barbara Stewart**

Barbara is a director of SKOPE Industries Limited, a Christchurch manufacturing company employing approximately 400 people. In addition to serving on the trust board of the Champion Centre, she is on the Cholmondeley Foundation, Chairman of the Court Theatre fundraising campaign and Co-Patron of the Diabetes (Christchurch) Society. She was involved as a local body, elected representative for 15 years, including three years on Waimairi District Council, three years as a community board member for the Fendalton ward of Christchurch City, and nine years as a city councillor for the Fendalton ward of the Christchurch City Council.

### **Graeme H Daniel**

Graeme has been a principal in special education settings for over twenty five years. He is currently Principal of Allenvale School, was principal of Halswell Residential College and has worked for the Education Review Office. He is currently the president of SEPANZ and is a member of several education advisory boards at a national and local level.

### **David Kerr**

David has worked as a General Practitioner in Christchurch for over 30 years. He was the founding Chair of Pegasus Medical Group, and was the Clinical leader for Mental Health for this organisation for many years. He is Chair of Ryman Healthcare Ltd, Deputy Chair of Pharmac and Chair of EcoCentral Ltd.

### **David Lang**

David is a partner in the law firm of Saunders & Co, working principally in the fields of commercial and property law. He is on one of the Standards Committees of the New Zealand Law Society, and is the honorary solicitor for a number of Charitable Trusts. David was a member of the Board of Trustees of Kirkwood Intermediate School for 6 years, and is presently on the Board of the Nurse Maude Association.

### **Andrew Hall**

Andrew is the parent of a child who attended the Champion Centre. He is currently Senior Business Analyst with the information services Group of the Canterbury District Health Board. Previously he was the Software Manager at the electronics manufacturer Dynamic Controls and prior to that he was the CEO of New Zealand Spinal Trust. Andrew is now on the Board of NZ Spinal Trust as well as a consumer representative on the Ministry of Health's National Ethics Advisory Committee.

Dr. Susan Foster-Cohen, PhD, Director

Since my last report, the Champion Centre has been working hard to provide the best possible services to infants and young children with developmental delays and disabilities in Canterbury. Throughout the year we have striven to work towards the goals identified in our 2010-2015 Strategic Plan (see the centre of this report) and the evidence that we have done that is presented in the following pages.



**Strategic Plan Goal 1 is to provide long-term sustainability of the Champion Centre service for infants and children with disabilities.** It has two objectives.

The first objective is to **Maintain Core Service Funding** and I am pleased to say that we continue to be supported by the various government agencies with whom we have long-standing contracts. However, while this support remains in place, the monetary value of these contracts is not increasing even in line with inflation, let alone to meet our actual expenses. Some summary information about what we receive from government and how it falls short of our service delivery costs is included in this report. At the beginning of 2014 I had some very serious concerns about our ability to continue to deliver the services required by our clients; but I am happy to say that since then we have received a number of multi-year donations that has eased the burden considerably in some areas of the programme. We are also in constructive dialogue with our landlord (the Canterbury District Health Board) about how much rent we can afford and they have agreed to continue on a rent free basis until August 2015.

The second objective is to **Maintain Service Effectiveness** which we have succeeded in doing thanks to the ongoing willingness of most staff to work for lower than market salaries and to some new staff willing to join the team knowing that while we offer a professionally rich and rewarding place to work, we are unlikely ever to be able to pay market rates unless government contracts increase markedly. We have had a number of staffing changes during the year, including in the administration team, the family support team, and therapy teams. I am exceedingly grateful to all the staff for their dedication to the children and families and to the organisation that allows us to offer our multi-disciplinary family-focussed programme.

Strategic Plan Goal 2 is **to advocate for all children with disabilities through training and research.** It has three objectives. The first is to **expand the impact of the Champion Centre both regionally and nationally.** The second is to **expand the advocacy role of the Champion Centre through training.** And the third is **to engage in appropriate research projects.** We continue to make progress in all these areas. Thanks to the Christchurch Press and to the organisers of various fundraising activities, we are becoming better known locally and we are putting energy into engaging with local companies and organisations who are willing to support us. We have created training materials for parents and professionals in the form of a new DVD in collaboration with the New Zealand Down Syndrome Association and an Australian colleague active in the Australian Early Childhood Intervention Association. And we are now beginning to write up a first wave of important findings from our research database of children's progress.

I hope you enjoy this report!

*Susan H. Foster-Cohen.*

Of the 163 children currently in the service, there are 62 girls and 101 boys. 22 of our current clients identify as Māori, 1 as Cook Island Māori, 3 Indian, 1 as Philippino, 2 as Samoan and 1 as South African, 4 European and 125 as New Zealand European (or simply 'New Zealand'). Not all parents have reported their home status, but at least 11 children are being raised by solo parents, and 4 are fostered. 37 families come from areas of Canterbury outside Christchurch and 126 from Christchurch.



The largest group of children by diagnosis are those born prematurely. 81 were born anywhere from 2 to 15 weeks early with birthweights as low as 530 grams. Of the 82, 21 have a diagnosable disability requiring a full service and 60 are on the Assessment and Monitoring programme at risk of developmental delay. Of the remaining 81 children, 26 have Down syndrome; 4 have Autism Spectrum Disorder; 25 have a diagnosis of developmental delay of unknown cause; 4 have a primary diagnosis of cerebral palsy; and the remaining 23 have diagnoses of specific syndromes or conditions resulting from other causes.

Children attend individualised programmes with others at their same age and/or developmental stage. In these programmes each child/family has one-on-one time with each therapist/specialist as well as group time for music and kai. 11 children are in programmes for babies, 30 in what we call 'middle years' programmes and 26 are preparing for school in our 'transition' programmes. A further 4 are currently in our Relating and Communicating programme, but are expected to move into the appropriate multi-disciplinary programme before transitioning into school.



We have served 1,652 children since the programme began and our graduates range in age from 6 to 38 years old. Most have gone on to surprise and delight their families and teachers with skills and contributions that would not have been thought possible when they were first born or diagnosed.

Every year, we encourage families to give us feedback on the services we provide. At the end of 2013, we did this via an online survey. Here is some of what families told us:

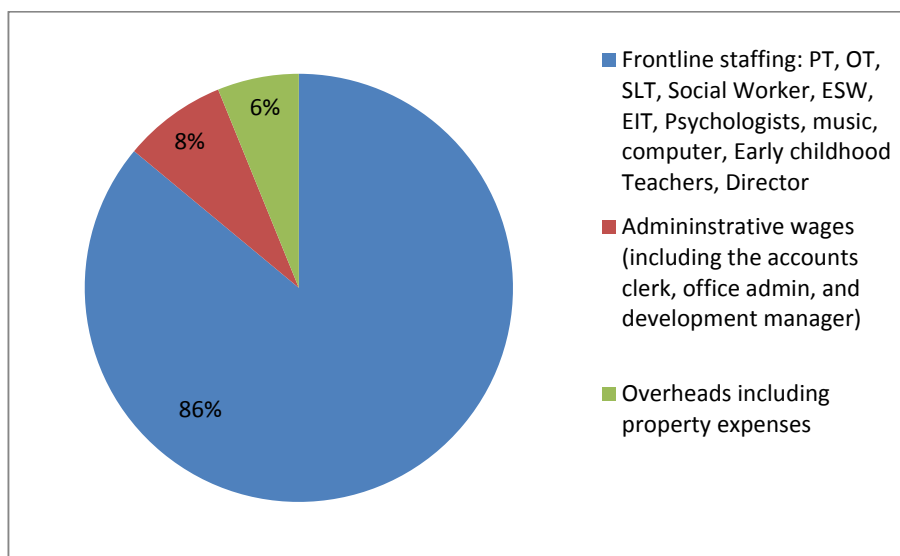
- They were our rock in an unsettled time.
- I have seen my daughter make the most amazing progress which makes me very happy.
- I love that they get to keep track of her progress week by week. They celebrate her milestones along with my husband and I. I also enjoy celebrating other children's development; we are like a big family.
- We feel that there is opportunity to share our understanding of our child.
- The therapist gives us tools to implement therapy into our day to day activities or give us great suggestions that we may not have thought of.
- They make it very easy to understand how their suggestions can be implemented and how they will help.
- The exercises aren't hard but finding time to do them can be.
- Our family support worker has gone beyond the call of duty. Great support. Even helped me at home when I was unwell on several occasions.
- What an amazing place! and amazing people! We love coming every week!
- I feel very supported and have especially felt that the transition to school process has been not so nerve wracking because of the Champion Centre.
- The Champion Centre has been a bright light in our lives. Before coming here, we felt a bit lost in the system, and when things were really tough, we had no one 'looking out' for us. Once coming here, we feel supported, loved, and cared for, and are especially happy that we have another set of eyes (many sets!) and hearts to be sure our daughter is developing well.
- Thanks for all your caring and guidance.
- She has made tremendous progress and it helps us to know what areas to focus on and develop at home.



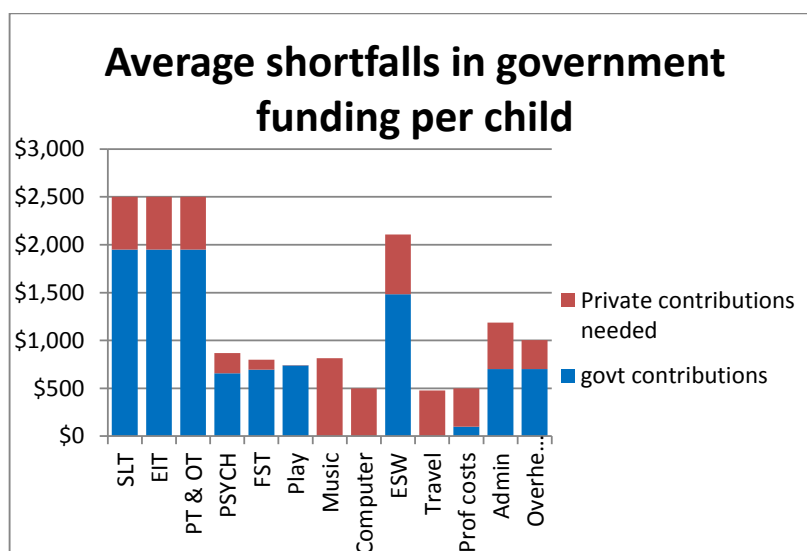


## HOW WE SPEND OUR MONEY

Most of our money is spent on frontline staffing, with a small admin team for over 60 full and part-time staff. Our current overheads include property expenses but, at this stage, no rent as we are still in a rent free period negotiated with our landlord, the Canterbury District Health Board.



Each child's team is constructed to meet their needs. Not every child receives every type of input but, averaged across the service, service delivery currently costs \$16,497 per child per year, to which the government contributes \$10,924 (see below). The cost of each area ranges from an average of \$499 per year (for computer supported learning) to \$2,500 per year for each of the "core" therapies (Speech and Language Therapy, Early Intervention Teaching, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy). These shortfalls are why we cannot, unfortunately, pay market rates to our highly skilled therapists.





# The team around each child is based on need

## Average costs per child

Total average yearly costs per child\* = \$16,497

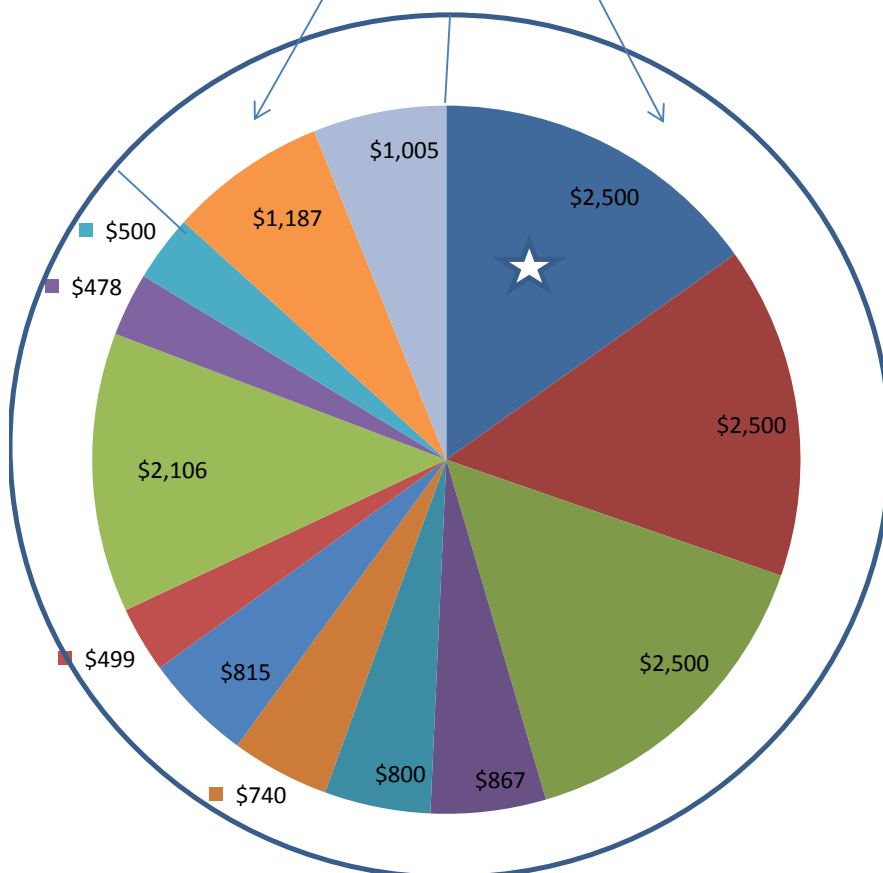
Government average funding per child = \$10,924

Direct care costs = 86%  
Admin/overheads = 14%

Read clockwise from



- Speech and language therapist (SLT)
- Early Intervention Teacher (EIT)
- Physiotherapist & Occupational Therapist (PT/OT)
- Psychologist
- Social Worker (SW) or Kawhakupuwai
- Playroom specialist
- Learning through Music specialist
- Computer supported Learning specialist
- Education Support Worker (ESW)
- Travel for ESW and SW
- Staff supervision, registration, PD
- Admin support
- Overheads



\*Based on serving 111 children per year in the multi-disciplinary programme and 60 in the Monitoring Programme

### THE CHAMPION CENTRE: A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN EARLY INTERVENTION

The Champion Centre provides specialist early intervention to infants and young children with disabilities and their families through a centre-based multi-disciplinary approach that:

- Is based on the very best scientific understanding of child development and disability.
- Supports family and whānau to foster and encourage their child's development through playful relationship-based activities.
- Works holistically with infants and children to support all areas of development: social, intellectual, physical, emotional.
- Advocates with other agencies and individuals on behalf of children and their families/whanau.
- Is proactive in supporting a bi-cultural approach with all families and whānau.

This strategy document makes the following assumptions:

- 1) That **sustainability** of the Champion Centre involves:
  - a) Maintenance of a staff to client ratio that sustains the provision of a best-practice service.
  - b) Hiring and retention of suitably qualified therapy and support staff who are fairly remunerated and adequately supported.
  - c) Ongoing partnership with all client families at all levels of the service.
  - d) Maintenance of physical facilities capable of supporting the programme.
- 2) That the **advocacy** role of the Champion Centre for all children with developmental disabilities involves:
  - a) Dissemination of the Champion Centre model of practice to other professionals through training.
  - b) Public education including of policy makers and others with power over children's lives.
  - c) Engagement in appropriate research both local and nationally



<b>Goal 1: To provide long-term sustainability of The Champion Centre service for infants and children with disabilities</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Key actions</b>	<b>Measures of progress</b>
Maintain core service funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase government contributions to service delivery</li> <li>• Increase private support of service delivery</li> <li>• Develop a long-term funding plan that includes a capital base</li> <li>• Maintain prudent budgets</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for partnerships and joint funding with other appropriate agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government funding increases</li> <li>• Private funding increases</li> <li>• Maintenance of overheads at 20% or less of total expenditure</li> <li>• Appropriate service connections are maintained/developed</li> </ul>
Maintain service effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain appropriate ratios between staff and client numbers</li> <li>• Maintain appropriate distribution of staff expertise</li> <li>• Work towards market rates for all staff</li> <li>• Ensure succession of senior and junior staff</li> <li>• Maintain high professional standards of all staff</li> <li>• Maintain effective partnership with all client families</li> <li>• Maintain and develop connections with other providers</li> <li>• Maintain bicultural and multicultural effectiveness</li> <li>• Develop robust outcome data collection and tracking systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear succession plan</li> <li>• Strategic provision of practical training for students and staff</li> <li>• Outcome data shows clear evidence of progress for all children</li> <li>• Maintenance of appropriate staff numbers and expertise distribution</li> <li>• Successful reviews by all the quality assurance bodies that govern the Centre's activities</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: To advocate for all children with disabilities through training and research</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Key actions</b>	<b>Measures of progress</b>
To expand the impact of the Champion Centre both regionally and nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase understanding among early intervention professionals of how to meet the needs of children with disabilities</li> <li>• Increase understanding among teachers of how to include children with disabilities in mainstream education</li> <li>• Increase understanding among child welfare professionals of how to meet the needs of children with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of face-to-face and on-line training designed to generate income</li> <li>• Delivery of pilot model services with a fee for service</li> <li>• Holding of symposia and conferences with international speakers</li> </ul>
To expand the advocacy role of the Champion Centre through training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to change public perceptions of young children with disabilities and to encourage them being valued by the community</li> <li>• To help government and policy makers to understand the effectiveness of the Champion Centre model of service</li> <li>• To actively support initiatives from government and private sources most likely to support better outcomes for children with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive media coverage</li> <li>• Development of collaborative relationships with other organisations.</li> </ul>
To engage in appropriate research projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in appropriate research in collaboration with local, national and international universities and other research units.</li> <li>• To develop the infrastructure to support research at the Centre</li> <li>• To collect new data and exploit existing data held by the Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed responses to tender invitations.</li> <li>• Publication of results.</li> </ul>

## HOW WE HELP OURSELVES

Our biggest cost is wages because it is the therapy staff that are the service. We are not able to pay therapy staff what they would get in the equivalent public service because we do not receive sufficient funds to do so; but we try to make sure that as much of our budget as possible goes into frontline staffing (see pie graphs in this report). To this end, we **keep our administration and overhead costs to a minimum**, by having a very small admin team for a large number of staff, and by getting the best deals we can on everything from photocopying and envelopes to carpet cleaning and laundry.

Maximising our capacity to **generate interest from our funding**. We have a flexible educational account with ASB, which gives us the opportunity to quickly transfer funds into interest bearing accounts. The government grant funding is paid on either monthly, quarterly or six-monthly schedules, so at various times of the year we hold as yet unspent funds that we can increase through interest generation.

A key activity is trying to raise our profile in the Canterbury community. To this end we accept any as many offers to speak at service clubs and events as we can. We offer **illustrated talks** with a slide show and a short DVD and can provide an informative brochure for participants to take away. We also have two stand-up banners which promote the work of the Centre that can be placed at the venue. If you would be interested in having a speaker, please contact Susan at [susan.fostercohen@championcentre.org.nz](mailto:susan.fostercohen@championcentre.org.nz)

We have an emailed **newsletter** at least twice a year which summarises some of our activities. We always include illustrated stories about the children and the progress they have made, photographs of presentations of funds from donors, and any other pieces of news we think will interest our supporters. If you are not already receiving our newsletter please let Eve know at [eve.nissen@championcentre.org.nz](mailto:eve.nissen@championcentre.org.nz)



We also have a clear presence on-line. Our **website** at [www.championcentre.org.nz](http://www.championcentre.org.nz) contains lots of information about who we are, what we do, and how our supporters can help us. We also place some of our news on the site. However, the quickest way of keeping up with us is through our very active **Facebook page**. At time of writing we have almost 1,200 'likes' – up from 550 at the end of November last year. Facebook has been an important tool in highlighting events, fundraising and for raising awareness of the Champion Centre, and what we do. It has increased the conversation out in the community about The Champion Centre.

## HOW OTHERS HELP US

Government grants (from Health, Education, and Social Development) provide about 65% of our income. But despite the fact that the economics of investment in early childhood are now well known (effective investment in early childhood reaps huge savings later in life), we have never managed to persuade government to invest fully in the futures of the children of Canterbury. So we must go, cap in hand, to a variety of other sources.



The bulk of our private funding comes from **applications to trusts and granting agencies**. We prepare these applications in-house, using the skills of our development manager, the director and other staff as needed. We are constantly researching new trusts as well as maintaining our relationships with those that have funded us in the past. The reality, however, is that trusts do not fund any group in perpetuity, and so with most trusts we go through periods of funding and no funding. We are proud, however, that we are associated with some of the most prestigious and influential trusts in the country. If you are involved with, or know of, trusts we may not yet have approached, please do let us know.

We are always most grateful when generous individuals see their way to giving us funding. Whether it is a small regular donation through **payroll giving** or a large **lump sum donation**, it is very much appreciated. All donations over \$5 qualify for the 30% tax rebate and in the case of payroll giving this is instantaneously returned to the donor. Some people prefer to give to a particular part of the programme; others to give untagged funding so that it can be used wherever it is needed. We can always provide information about exactly what we need, and the graphs in this report help give a picture of where the shortfalls are.

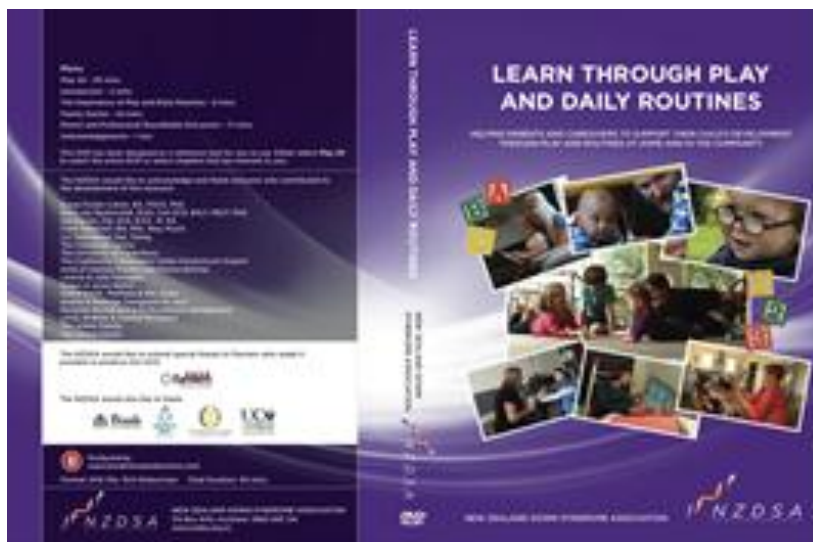
We are working hard to increase the number of our corporate supporters. Some of our current corporates are able to make **donations of equipment** and/or skills; some are able to promote payroll giving; some have **charitable foundations** which make grants; and still others help get the word out about us with **free publicity**. We are very keen to talk to any business that would like to contribute to the well-being of Canterbury children and families by supporting our work.

Finally, we are the beneficiary of **events** organised by others. We do not have the resources to organise fundraising events ourselves; so we are extremely grateful when others can do this for us. The Champion Centre has been the beneficiary of golf tournaments, balls, bike races, marathons, boxing matches, breakfasts, bake-offs, sausage sizzles, art auctions, and more. Please do think of us as the charity to support when you organise your next event!



## ADVOCACY THROUGH TRAINING

This year we were delighted to be asked to make a second **DVD for parents of children with disabilities**. Funded through grants made to the New Zealand Down Syndrome Association, it is called **Learn Through Play and Daily Routines**. It features seven of our families raising children with a range of different disabilities talking about how they use the routines and play opportunities of daily life to contribute to their child's development. Professionally produced by Borderless Productions, the DVD also includes discussion of the value of play and routines by current staff members Clare Tattersson (Psychologist) and Liz Townshend (Communication Facilitator), by Dr. Anne van Bysterveldt (Senior Lecturer in Early Intervention at the University of Canterbury) and by Sue Davies (Education and Training Consultant from Australia) who joined us for this trans-Tasman enterprise. We have had some great feedback on the DVD from Professor Barry Carpenter, OBE in the UK. Here's what he said:



*"This video gives a truly 21st century perspective on how families can, through their daily routines, nurture and promote the development of their child with disabilities. It reflects the shift in the pattern of childhood disability, by giving examples of the new generation of children such as those born prematurely. It advocates powerfully that inclusion begins in the home within the whole family."* Professor Barry Carpenter, OBE. PhD. Professor of Early Childhood Intervention, University of Worcester, UK.

This year we also presented a **Seminar on the Outcomes of Prematurity** to practitioners from a wide range of health, education and social welfare agencies working with children born premature. Topics included the implications for learning outcomes for children born premature, the impact on the family and parenting practices and an overview of intervention strategies. The seminar was initiated and organised by Huia Bracken\* (Kaiwhakapuawai). Alison Gray (Clinical Psychologist and Family Support Team Leader) was the main speaker, with contributions from Huia Bracken, Deborah Kerry (Senior Physiotherapist) and Louise Burrowes (Plunket Nurse). Around 40 people attended the seminar from a wide variety of community and statutory agencies. We had positive feedback about the session including,

- *"you have spiked a lot of interest in this subject and everyone wants to know more....!!"* Sandra Lorgelly (Family Help Trust);
- *"I would like to be kept informed of any other presentations you are having at The Champion Centre".* Leana Wilson, Psychologist (CDHB);
- *"Thankyou very much for the presentation notes and for putting on the presentation. It was great to go to and to refresh and hear updated information on the impacts of prematurity."* Heather Davidson (Early Start).

\*Huia is one of the authors of a recently published paper: Darlow, B. A., Horwood, L. J., Pere-Bracken, H. M., & Woodward, L. J. (2013). Psychosocial Outcomes of Young Adults Born Very Low Birth Weight. *Pediatrics*, 132(6), 1521-1528.

## Researching Partnership with Families

As part of our service delivery and research, we have been using some carefully selected questionnaires to help parents share their knowledge of their children with their therapy teams. Results from two of these questionnaires are summarised here:

### Study 1: Executive functioning in children born premature

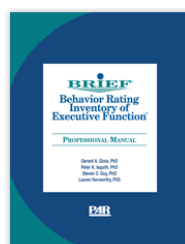
**Project leader: Dr. Alison Gray, Psychologist.**

- The team working with infants and children born premature has been examining the prevalence of Executive Function difficulties in the children that they see.
- Executive Function includes the ability to plan and organise activity, remember instructions, keep emotions from getting in the way, and shift between activities. Good Executive Function is vital for success at school.
- The parents of 26 children completed the Behaviour Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF) when their children reached 3 years of age, corrected for their prematurity. The results indicate that compared to published expectations of full-term children, 46% of the premature children had significant difficulties with some aspect of executive functioning, with working memory and cognitive flexibility being particularly problematic.
- These results help us encourage teachers, nurses, caregivers and others to think about executive function when working with premature infants and children.

### Study 2: Parents' and therapists' views of children's communication

**Project Leader: Dr. Susan Foster-Cohen, Centre Director**

- Parents of 22 children beginning to prepare for transition to school completed two questionnaires.
- The Bates-MacArthur Communicative Developmental Inventory asks about the child's vocabulary and grammar. The Language Use Inventory asks parents about how children use language to communicate.
- Comparison of the two questionnaires showed that parents are very consistent in their reporting of their children's communication, adding credence to their role as observers and recorders of their children's language.
- The same parents and the children's therapy teams completed the Communicative subscale of the Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System (ABAS). A comparison of the impressions of the different adults suggested that some children are seen almost identically by the different adults; generally those who have either very compromised communication skills or who have close to age appropriate skills. However, other children are seen differently by different adults, with parents generally perceiving their children as having greater skills than are observed by the therapy teams.
- These results are important both for therapy teams wanting to understand how children present in different contexts and for teachers who need to have as full a picture of each child's capacities as possible.





## AYLA'S STORY

The Learning Through Music Programme at the Champion Centre supports children's development through activating and building on their natural musicality. It supports walking, talking, thinking and feeling, and often it can help a child discover the excitement of music for its own sake. Here is one story from the Music Programme this year

### **Listen to me!**

Ayla has just turned four years old and is a very determined young lady with quite definite opinions which she shares easily with those around her in a clear voice. She has little time for those who see her powered wheelchair and assume she cannot do much for herself because, indeed, she has a fine intelligence and much to tell the world.

Two years ago, however, the frequent bouts of chest infections that landed her in hospital almost every other week meant that she barely spoke above a whisper. She couldn't breathe well enough to speak up or to clear her lungs of the microbes that made her health so poor. She was so weak that she could barely move without getting exhausted.

As part of Ayla's team at the Champion Centre Linda, the music specialist, noticed that Ayla had a very fine-tuned sense of beat. Whenever there was music being played, Ayla's feet would start moving in time and Linda realised that if she could harness that response, she could perhaps get Ayla's hands, arms and body to move better.



Ayla was too weak at first to hold a shaker or a beater for a drum, so Linda used a computer tablet to help her make a noise with just a light tap of the fingers, and her family did the same at home, giving her a chance to have her own 'disco' by selecting her favourite songs.

To strengthen Ayla's legs and feet, Linda tied bells onto her ankles so they tinkled when Ayla tapped her feet in time; and she encouraged her to beat a drum with her feet instead of with her hands. To build strength in her arms and hands, she offered rakau sticks that could be gently tapped together, and soon Ayla was able to beat a drum with a beater. She used ribbon sticks while she tapped her feet, swung her knees, and jived her shoulders to complex Latin rhythms. And at home she used a keyboard to develop her fine motor skills.

Linda and her family also encouraged Ayla to sing by giving her a chance to complete the notes at the end of each of the lines of a well-known song or nursery rhyme. At first she couldn't get enough air into her lungs to make a sound, but little by little, over several months, she began to be able to draw larger and larger breaths. At home, her family gave Ayla small pipes and a harmonica that helped her make music as she developed her ability to control her breathing. As that control grew, Ayla was able to increase the number of words she could say before pausing for breath and soon the world began to know exactly what this switched on little girl has to say for herself.

Over time, Ayla has grown stronger and more verbal. Now when she is hospitalised, they know they can rely on Ayla to tell them what she wants and how she feels. Ayla's parents are grateful for all the help they have received from the Champion Centre, and credit the Music Programme with helping to show them the impressive thinking and talking skills their daughter possesses and for giving them ideas for things to do at home.

Love them or hate them, computers are a fact of modern life and we love how they can be used cleverly and creatively to support children's learning of core concepts such as cause and effect, the meaning of 'more' and 'less', and 'same' and 'different'. Below is just one example of a success story from our Computer Supported Learning Programme at the Champion Centre.

### Fraser's story

No one is entirely sure what four-year-old Fraser (not his real name) can see and hear. They know there is nothing structurally wrong with his eyes, but he does not seem to be using them to discover and learn about his world, and because his disability means he cannot tell others what he understands they have to be detectives to work out how to connect with Fraser and encourage him to connect with the world around him.



When Fraser first started in the Computer Supported Learning Programme, one thing the team did know was that he loved to watch a video called "Hooray for Fish" on his iPad at home. So, Hilary decided to use that to try to enter Fraser's world. She downloaded the video and cut it up into segments and put each segment into a different Powerpoint slide. Then she set up the transitions in the slide show so that Fraser would have to touch the screen to make the next slide come up. He watched the first part of the video with avid attention, as usual. But then it stopped! He showed his surprise. Then someone gently took his hand and touched it to the screen and the video started again. After a few goes, he 'got it'. He could make the next section of the video come up by touching the screen. He had learned the beginnings of cause and effect. A huge positive milestone for

Fraser!

From there, Fraser moved on to using other programmes with clear moving figures on a black background. He learned how to touch a screen that was empty in order to make a picture he liked appear and he increased his ability to track images that moved across the screen. He has now begun to follow the pictures in a book his mother reads to him.

Fraser's team and family are learning more and more about what he can process and how to extend his abilities.

At the moment, the team is trying to exploit Fraser's love of classical music, particularly classical piano which his family knows he likes to listen to. Hilary has made a slide show of pictures of his family members (his mum, his dad, his sisters, his grandparents) and put a piece of classical piano music as a backing to see if it will grab his attention enough that he will look at the photos of his family and show that he has recognised each person.

Little by little Fraser is learning that his eyes will give him information he wants and he is beginning actively to seek out information on the computer either by touching the screen or pressing a large switch that is the first step towards using a computer mouse.

## KIWIBANK

Kiwibank is proud to be supporting the continued work that The Champion Centre and their staff do to make a significant difference in the lives of the children and families they support.

We wish you every success and thank you for making a difference.

*Tracey Berry*  
General Manager Retail Distribution



## DYNAMIC CONTROLS

Like The Champion Centre, Dynamic Controls strives to make a difference by enhancing the quality of life for those with special needs and also the wider community. The Dynamic Controls Social Club is proud to have been a supporter of The Champion Centre team and families again in 2014.

In June this year we were once again pleased to have Marie Stevenson (Education Support Worker) come to our workplace and talk with great passion to the team about her job and the challenges that ESW's face. One of those challenges is the large amount of travel required in the role and so it is with great pleasure that the Dynamic Controls Social Club is able to donate \$3000 from various fundraising activities to go towards travel costs.



This is now our third year of supporting The Champion Centre and it will be our privilege to continue our support in 2015!

Craig Jackson, Dynamic Controls Social Club

Charlotte Walshe, CEO

## THE PRESS

We would like to thank The Press for supporting the Champion Centre through regular placements of our calls for support for the children of Canterbury.

We are proud to be listed among the organisations that The Press has been championing during its more than 150 year history.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Champion Centre is sincerely grateful for the generous support of our community, through donations of time, energy and funds during the financial year ending June 2014.

We thank the following Champion Supporters of the Champion Centre

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### Events

Battle of The Rebuild –  
Justin Wallace  
Canterbury Rams Event  
Coffee for a Cause - Carolyne Grant

Kiwi Brevett - Murray Wilkinson  
and Martin Nichols  
Longest Italian Lunch –  
Dobson Family  
Russley Golf Club

St. Margaret's College (Fun Run)  
Tai Tapu Golf Tournament  
The Christchurch Press  
Tobii Fundraiser - Anette de Joux  
Z Energy "Good in The Hood"

### Payroll Giving

Christchurch Casino  
Dynamic Controls  
Churchill T

Telecom  
Foster Cohen S

McMurtrie EM  
Nissen E

### Gifts in Kind

Dynamite Signs – Signage  
Hairy Lemon – Website Development  
NZ Post (Community Post) - Postage

P & R Robertson – Carpet Cleaning  
Patch Judy Group- Quilts  
Rheel IT Support- IT Support

The Christchurch Press Advertising

*"Tuia te rangi e tū iho nei. Tuia te papa e takoto nei"*  
*"As the earth meets the sky, so people depend on one another"*

