

Guidelines For EOTC Coordinators

Developing and Implementing Programmes

Identify the needs of learners, teachers, and the community. Assess the abilities and interests of these people, and plan the school or centre's EOTC programme around them. Recognise the value of experience and of novelty. Provide for common interests, and also for individual differences. Involve local people, events, and places as much as possible, but avoid exposing children repeatedly to the same basic experience. ("Not the rocky shore **again!**") Encourage the development of networks among educators, institutions, and communities. Successful EOTC programmes are designed co-operatively, and respond to changing needs and circumstances.

EOTC coordinators cannot work without the understanding, co-operation, help, and encouragement of their staff colleagues, the community, and the parents and care givers of the children. This chapter suggests ways of targeting these groups. Some ways of reporting on EOTC are suggested, and a list of possible subject headings for a staff EOTC resource file is included.

Targeting Colleagues

What ideas do your colleagues have about EOTC?

"I really enjoyed working with staff from other curriculum areas as part of that EOTC project."	"I had a great response from the community when I asked if we could visit workplaces as part of our careers unit."	<i>"It's hard to keep an eye on lively little kids when you're in a new place."</i>
"You should see Jo on camp! In the classroom she's a disruption, but out there,..."	"I'm not prepared to go on a camp. I have to spend time with my family."	"I get fed up when the biology teacher keeps taking kids out of my class to go on trips."
"That class has been much more co-operative and interested following their week at the Lodge."	<i>"The kids' responses and appreciation make it worthwhile"</i>	"They loved the fire station, and being able to sit in the engine and try on the hats."

EOTC coordinators need to encourage all staff to have a commitment to:

- providing worthwhile EOTC experiences for the children they teach;
- working co-operatively with other classes or groups;
- increasing their own skills for teaching outdoors.

Suggestions

- Request a special staff meeting on EOTC. At this, use a brainstorming session to gather the ideas teachers currently have about EOTC. Accept all views without comment and, later, classify them. Note areas, which arouse positive and negative feelings, and prepare a strategy for overcoming any perceived difficulties-
- Introduce staff gradually to EOTC activities – in suitable, safe, and non-threatening environments.
- Discover staff hobbies and interests that could be used as part of an EOTC programme.
- Encourage staff to take up relevant training and personal development opportunities.
- Organise school- or centre-based courses for staff, with lots of practical activities in, which learners can readily become involved. Include sessions on dealing with the problems involved in managing children outdoors.
- Encourage experienced staff to listen to the concerns of individual teachers about EOTC and to work with them to find solutions. It may be possible to release teachers to work alongside more experienced EOTC staff in your own or another school or centre.
- Establish an EOTC resource file and ensure that all staff know its location.
- Establish an EOTC liaison group with neighbouring or contributing and receiving schools or centres to exchange ideas and resources.
- Organise familiarisation visits to EOTC venues and camps.
- Utilise camps and lodges with resident teachers.

Targeting the Community

What ideas does the community have about EOTC?

"Looking after one three-year-old out on the street is bad enough: don't ask me to go with a whole group!"	"If you are being billeted you'll have to have a new dressing gown."	"I want my kids to learn more about jobs in our community. What workplaces can we visit?"
"School camps are a waste of time."	"Yes that's all very well, but does it get them a job?"	"I helped out several times with last year's programme. The kids had a great time. I wouldn't have believed my Sarah could achieve so much."
"I'm not having my girl sleeping in a tiny hut with lots of blokes."	The kids had a great trip to town. They went to places I didn't even know about."	
"Sam's really come out of himself this year. I think the class trips played a big part in this."	"It was neat to leave Bill and the littlies at home and go away with Trudy's class. I got so much out of it."	"This list says woollen trousers and a parka. I can't afford to but them."

Coordinators need to take positive steps to ensure that the board of trustees, parents, whānau, and other members of the community understand why the school or centre has an EOTC programme.

Suggestions

- Invite parents to accompany their children on trips and to visit camps. .
- Involve parents in planning EOTC units.
- Report on EOTC activities in school or centre newsletters, newspapers, or magazines, and in the local media.
- Prepare a leaflet for parents outlining the EOTC policy and programmes.
- Invite parents to offer venues for EOTC activities; at a parent-teacher meeting, brain- storm a list of venues and activities.
- Organise an EOTC activity for children and parents in or near the school or centre grounds. For example, parents could be invited to join in part of the evening programme at a school-based overnight camp.
- Organise a parents' meeting with EOTC as the theme – for example:
 - show a video (or slide set) which illustrates one EOTC activity in depth;
 - show a video (or slide set) which illustrates the scope of EOTC activities;
 - have children and teachers talk about current EOTC activities;
 - display examples of children's work from before, during, and after a trip;

– organise an activity to show the ideas and questions people have about EOTC.

Accept all questions and suggestions without comment, and ask parents, working in small groups, to classify them. Display them and use them as a basis for discussion.