

**Poppies Kerikeri**

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**ADDITIVE FREE FOR BETTER CONCENTRATION**

Without adequate levels of concentration, children can not learn to read. South Australian schools have been introducing 'Eating for Success' trying additive free diets for about two weeks.

Volunteer families were the first to eliminate additives from the home menu. Whole classes followed and now entire schools are undertaking this challenge.

Peter and Bronwyn Pollnitz, [peterbron@opusnet.com.au](mailto:peterbron@opusnet.com.au), have volunteered to organize these trials. Psychologist Sue Dengate, author of 'Fed Up' and 'Failsafe Cookery' is available for helpful advice and could be persuaded to help with New Zealand school trials.

ABC, an Australian television channel, has filmed extensive interviews with teachers, parents and school pupils questioning positive changes in mood, health, learning and behaviour. After the trials, five year olds have reported feeling 'not so worried' Asthma has improved along with not as many bad dreams, headaches, itches, fights and finding schoolwork easier. But the biggest improvement so far, has been with sleep.

Dr. Sarah Blunden is a sleep researcher with the University of South Australia. She is interested in making a researcher available to the schools having another 'Eating for Success' booster trial in 2012.

While teaching at the International School of Jubail, Saudi Arabia, an eight year old early emergent reader with severe behaviour problems was transferred from the British Year 1 class to my Kindergarten class of five year olds, in the American school. By the end of that school year, he was reading at his chronological age of nearly nine. When additives and fruit juice (too much salicylate) were excluded from his diet his mood, health, learning and behaviour all improved so much that he was no longer excluded from the classroom and made many friends. His parents reported an improvement in sleep as the first improvement.

The University of Southampton in the United Kingdom, has recently published a paper in 'The Lancet' entitled 'Food Additives and Hyperactive Behaviour in 3 year olds and 8/9 year old children in the community, a randomized double blinded, placebo-controlled duet' The conclusion is 'artificial colours or a sodium benzoate preservative (or both) in diet, resulted in increased hyperactivity in 3

year old and 8/9 year old children. A team of doctors headed by Professor Jim Stevenson completed this research in 2010. Sweets now sold in the UK carry warnings such as 'May have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children'

In New Zealand, additives banned many years ago in Scandinavian countries are still being used in foodstuffs attractive to children. Read Wendyl Nissen's articles in 'The Herald' for descriptions of packaged food items. Titles such as 'Chemical cocktail lurks inside cosmic ice pops' have five out of six colours banned in other countries. Unfortunately many parents do not read Wendyl Nissen's articles.

Food items such as cosmic ice pops, illustrate the level of junk food eaten every day in our playgrounds. At the 2011 New Zealand Reading Conference in Rotorua, Cecily Fisher, the Learning Area Selector for Visual Literacy for the National Library Services to Schools, told participants that Finland and Scandinavian countries had high levels of literacy and no one knows why. I told this group that many additives have been banned or never introduced into the food chain of Scandinavian countries and this is why literacy levels are so high.

Traveling in Eastern Europe with a group of American diplomats later in 2011, I was told that there are high levels of literacy in Cuba. This could be why a team of educators from the International Reading Association, was sent to assess Cuban literacy levels in October, 2011. My guess would be no pocket money for junk food. Visit schools in Rarotonga with enormous class sizes and not one child annoying the group. Cook Islands children do not have the money for junk food and eat from family gardens.

Research associate Michele Belot could find no other explanation for the improvements in national curriculum test results for pupils in Greenwich U.K. schools, than the introduction of Jamie Oliver's additive free school dinners.

Let's add 'Additive Free' to our 'Smoke Free' school zones.

Julienne S. Law