

Additive-free trial at kindy

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NEW TASTES: Kerikeri Kindergarten's Dylan Rosetta and head teacher Cheryl Kingi try out a kiwano fruit together, during the additive free week at the kindergarten.

Getting rid of junk food in favour of life-giving whole foods is the key to unlocking full potential in children.

That's the principle behind an additive-free five day trial undertaken at Kerikeri Kindergarten.

For a week, the kindergarten created an additive-free food environment, with the help of parents.

Since then they have continued to provide experiences for children and parents, preparing and eating fresh healthy foods, free of additives.

The kids tried different foods from gardens, orchards and fishing expeditions. The results are noticeable says head teacher Cheryl Kingi.

"Children have become more aware of healthy eating and its importance. We often hear them commenting on how strong and healthy they are becoming because they are eating healthy food," she says.

"Sleeping difficulties among other problems eased and for most families this will be a 5 day/forever exercise," she says.

Another additive-free week is planned. "It's criminal to expose our children to chemically laden foodstuffs", Kingi says.

The exercise at the kindergarten was spurred by a presentation by Kerikeri GP Dr Debbie Fewtrell and the enthusiasm of teacher Julienne Law who has led a 'brain food for better learning' crusade.

Law says fresh, healthy food will improve concentration, mood, behaviour and health for children and their families.

Kingi says the kindergarten trial was a staff, parents and community effort.

"Children usually take their own food to kindergarten but during the additive free week, parents paid \$10 per child for the week's morning teas and lunches, that were prepared by staff parents and children."

JULIENNE LAW'S CRUSADE

Julienne Law is Northland's contact for Coeliac New Zealand, a NZ ambassador for the Jamie Oliver Food Revolution and an international teacher.

In 2013, Law along with doctors Jenny Scott and Patricia Holborow worked on the parent nutrition brochure "Brain Food ' A guide to food for better learning.

She would love to see Far North schools attach "additive free" to their "smoke free" status.

Her rules for better brains and happier families:

1. Avoid processed, manufactured, refined, additive-loaded, synthetic, nutrient-deprived food.
2. Drink water and avoid other beverages.

3. Eat as nature intended you to - good natural food, including vegetables that have a great array of colours, raw if possible.
4. Minimise reliance on takeaway meals.
5. Aim to eat at the same time each day.
6. Sit to eat and use the dining table - superb family time.
7. Wash hands before and clean teeth after a meal.
8. Make family meals a team effort.
9. Restrict the availability of rubbish food.
10. Don't forget the emotional vitamins - praise, approval, hugs, interest, laughter.

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