



**Kia ora koutou**  
I have been involved in early childhood since I graduated from Dunedin College of Education as a

kindergarten teacher in 1982. I have spent time as a Teacher, Head Teacher, Senior Teacher and General Manager within the Dunedin Kindergarten Association. When I was paroled from there in 2002 I went into partnership with my wife Sue and colleague Robyn and founded Early Childhood on Stafford here in Dunedin. I have always been interested in why there have not been more male teachers in Early Childhood, especially as I believe that this is such a cool job and as such I expect my involvement with EC-Menz was always on the cards. I am proud that children in our centre in Dunedin have the best of both genders (we have three male teachers and one male student) and learn in an environment that has both males and females working in such harmony (visit [www.earlychildhoodonstafford.co.nz](http://www.earlychildhoodonstafford.co.nz)). I believe that both children and parents have

a real choice in our centre and this allows our children to build strong relationships with diverse adults and construct multiple gender identities based on the role models present.

At this year's EC-Menz summit held in Porirua the diversity of the men present was immense and it was affirming to meet so many males who are committed to teaching young children. This is a good time for men to be involved in ECE with both parents and teachers wanting more males to be active in the care and education of their children. The most powerful motivator for me was when one of my ex pupils (male) said "When I grow up I am going to be a preschool teacher like you Russell." Whether he does or not to me is irrelevant ... the key point here is that he saw teaching at this level as a possibility for him – how many other boys see the same?

My agenda is to further enhance curriculum choices for children by

encouraging more males into the sector, bringing a wider breadth of experiences and teaching techniques. To me it is important that men take a much more active role in raising young children and to do this the sector has to be open and encouraging. We have much work to do to make our workplaces more male friendly and EC-Menz is an important resource striving to achieve this within the early childhood sector. In light of this "Making our Workplace More Inclusive" will be the theme of our next summit held here in Dunedin on February 14-15 2009. We also want more women to join our group so that they can share our stories and help us make this difference – so please come along to our summit next February. Book your tickets now for cheap deals!

...Our children deserve both good female and male teachers – they can learn from us and we can learn from each other... join us on this journey at [www.ecmenz.org](http://www.ecmenz.org)

**EC-Menz National Men in Early Childhood Education Summit**  
Dunedin, Aotearoa/ NZ • 14 – 15 February 2009

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