

Our response

I feel it is important to comment further on the quotes used in the Nelson Mail last night.

When working with parents I always advocate positive strategies along with the importance of looking after yourself as a parent. If a child is winding up a parent to the extent that they need some time out, then for everyone's safety it may be necessary to put the child into the bedroom and hold the door or secure it so they can't come out so the parent can regain their composure. The parent can then deal with the situation in a calmer manner and therefore be more effective. A child being put in a room and unable to get out for a short period of time isn't going to have as many lasting effects as a child who is constantly verbally and maybe physically abused because the parent is constantly stressed by the child's behaviour.

Using time out is a positive strategy that isn't used in isolation. I discuss with parents the correct way to use time out but only after other strategies have been used. In some cases where children aren't getting the message that their behaviour is not okay it helps the child to understand that maybe they need to think about how they behave and listen to what the adult is telling them. Thinking time and time out are extremely effective ways of helping children learn self-control and more acceptable behaviours. Time out isn't about 'locking' a child in a room and leaving them there for a long period of time, but only for a short period of time – professionals talk about 1 minute for every minute of their age but I often say to parents that it is often less than that – say ½ a minute of every year of their age. The parent knows how long it will take to be effective.

Should there be any doubt raised by the article the Kindergarten Association definitely doesn't lock children in rooms or isolate children in any of their centres/kindergartens. All early childhood centres are required to have a behaviour management or positive guidance policy which outlines a process that will be used when dealing with inappropriate behaviour. One procedure that may be used is the child removed to a different area of play from where the behaviour has occurred and reminded of how to play appropriately. All positive guidance policies talk about acknowledging the child when they are playing and behaving appropriately to encourage more of the appropriate behaviours.

The Kindergarten Association is always looking at ways they can support parents in the community and has a reputation for providing parenting support and advice to parents. Bringing Nigel Latta is seen as just another way that parents can be supported. People who choose to come and hear Nigel in August will be able to decide for themselves how much of the information he shares they will use. I know through regular communication with parents that the TV programme "The Politically Incorrect Parenting Show" raised people's conscience about how they deal with parenting issues. Even if he says one thing that makes them think about their parenting and they make a change then that is effective. We all

know that the first step in making a change to something is to be aware that you are doing it.