

Press Release
(For immediate release)
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Educating the educators

The benefits of an educational philosophy developed in Italy are being shared with over 100 early childhood teachers in Invercargill this week.

A three-day ECE South Conference started at the Ascot Park Hotel today (Monday) with guest speakers Kirsty Liljegren and Kerrie O'Neill, from the St Leonard's Early Learning Centre in Melbourne, sharing their experience with the renowned Reggio Emilia Approach.

Kindergarten South advisory support teacher Pam Wilson, who helped organise the conference, said the topic had attracted teachers from throughout Southland and Otago.

"The speakers are sharing with us how they have taken an approach from Italy and incorporated it into their curriculum in Melbourne," she said.

"Now it's up to us to now bring it into our Southland centres."

The Italian city of Reggio Emilia was recognised worldwide for its innovative approach to education. The Reggio philosophy was created on the principles of respect, responsibility and community through exploration and discovery in a supportive and enriching environment.

It was based on the interests of children through a self-guided curriculum – a concept positively received.

"Everyone is just buzzing," Mrs Wilson said. "Reggio is about provoking children to think more deeply and just learning about it is already achieving that with the teachers."

Funding of \$9756 from the Invercargill Licensing Trust and its ILT Foundation enabled the conference to be staged for the first time and Mrs Wilson hoped it would become a bi-annual event.

"Invercargill is really leading the way in terms of educational opportunities for our teachers – it's fantastic," Mrs Wilson said.

ILT Foundation and Invercargill Licensing Trust chairman Alan Dennis said students would ultimately reap the rewards of teachers being able to access educational conferences in the city.

"We need to ensure our Southland children have the opportunity to benefit from exciting educational philosophies being developed around the world," he said.

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