



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

FOR YEAR ENDED
31ST MARCH 2018



EMPOWERED LEARNING TRUST

EMPOWERED LEARNING TRUST

Empowered Learning Trust Vision

"All children will have equitable access to education regardless of their learning differences."

Empowered Learning Trust Mission Statement

"It is the intention of the Empowered Learning Trust to deliver screening programs that identify individual student's barriers to learning and offer a range of interventions that assist them to reach their optimum potential."



Prepared by Karen Barker, Trust Manager, Empowered Learning Trust 31st March 2018

MITRE 10

**2017 NEW ZEALAND
COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR
FINALIST**
NEW ZEALANDER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

REGIONAL WINNER 2014



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Chairperson's Statement



It is once again my pleasure to reflect on the achievements of The Empowered Learning Trust over the last 12 months. We continue to facilitate the removal of various barriers to learning, and receive wonderful feedback to reiterate that what we are doing is making a positive difference in the lives of children and their families. Classroom teachers too, are affected positively and it is rewarding for us all to be involved in something that is clearly making such a difference.

We have a stable and engaged team of board members who each contribute in different ways to ensure a wide perspective on all matters. All Board members remain as volunteers and I sincerely thank them all for their valuable input.

Our screening staff and Screening Project Manager have now been in their roles for 7 years. They have built excellent working relationships with the schools we work in. I hear feedback that they operate very efficiently with a minimum of disruption to normal school routine. My sincere thanks to these wonderful women, who are now likely to be among the most experienced Irlen screeners in New Zealand. Their role includes educating, planning, screening, arranging follow up appointments and corrective programmes, and managing funding. We have recently completed a long overdue wage review and a small wage increase was approved for both screeners and Screening Project Manager.

As a result of their work our reputation has filtered further afield, with interest from other areas in New Zealand seeking information and advice. This is pleasing to see as it remains one of our visions to see all children in New Zealand being offered this type of screening. It is such an achievable programme, and relatively inexpensive when one considers the long term implications of learning and processing difficulties. We are all grateful for our Screening Project Manager Karen's ability to manage all the funding applications required and for ensuring the correct allocation according to the various criteria for each funder. No mean feat! Thanks also to Treasurer Yvonne for her diligence in supporting Karen.

In addition to sourcing funding, our other biggest challenge is in the lack of follow through by some families in attending appointments and taking advantage of the solutions we offer. Despite there being no cost to the family, and our staff offering support in taking children to appointments as required, other barriers obviously still exist. We will continue to work towards identifying the reasons for this, and maintain our focus on quality education and support to minimise this. We have discussed the use of other means of communicating with families, currently being somewhat restricted by the privacy policies of the schools we work in. This is one area of focus in our upcoming strategic planning.

The quite alarming reality is that across all the schools we have worked in over 7 years there continues to be an incidence of over 20% of children for whom learning is more difficult than others. In 2017 we have identified 76 children with confirmed visual barriers, 128 children with auditory barriers, and 94 children with specific learning disabilities. The Empowered Learning Trust supported these children through the funding of specialist appointments, Irlen and optometric lens, auditory support programmes, and full educational assessments. As a result we expect these children to enjoy improved outcomes both in their education and self-esteem which both lead to greater employability, and they will hopefully make more positive choices in their

lives than they may otherwise have. The cost of this support averaged approximately \$430 per child. I think most people would agree that this relatively small investment at this young age and it offers the potential to avoid much greater costs to families and government in the future. Without such support, some students might otherwise become dependent on welfare, substances, or crime. This is important and worthwhile work.

Karen has also initiated thorough evaluation of programs to assess the impact of our services in children's learning and well-being, so we will have more data available to show our results. We also acknowledge the need to collaborate with others with expertise in educational research. Karen has made some enquires and new connections this year, and is aware of some research currently being undertaken at Massey University in relation to the effectiveness of corrective lenses.

As we look into the future our long term goal also remains as it has since day one..... raising sufficient awareness so that one day this screening will be publicly funded and available to children throughout New Zealand, or even further afield than that. While we are completely confident that we are making a difference in the lives of children, we are a small group, in a small part of New Zealand. To ensure sustainability going forward it is important to have the need recognised by those who make national decisions about funding in health and education.

We sincerely thank those funders who appreciate our vision and show their belief in us by agreeing to send funds our way. Without you these children would be continuing to struggle without any understanding of why. (see Acknowledgments at end of report)

We also acknowledge the vital support of Health Reporoa, Taupo Auditory Processing Network and Hear Better Audiology, Irlen NZ, our Irlen diagnosticians Nyree Grigsby and Mary Cubie, our partner Optometrists and all the schools for their co-operation with our programmes.

The Empowered Learning Trust has evolved to become a professional and well respected provider of specialist screening services in our local schools. While I know we are all proud of this achievement, our real rewards come every day in knowing we are making a difference in small lives.

Kathy Cane



Chairperson

Who are we?

We are a charitable trust that is run by volunteers and is entirely self-funded. We rely heavily on the generosity of donors and funding organisations to deliver our programs in schools.

“It is the intention of the Trust to engage in projects that identify barriers to learning and provide support so that young people can reach their potential and exceed expectations. These efforts will improve the holistic well-being of individuals ultimately leading to a more harmonious community. The cornerstones to our work are integrity, generosity, and fostering the understanding of differences.”

Our beliefs:

- We believe people have the right of access to education regardless of learning style or difference
- We acknowledge everyone's unique abilities and strengths
- We support community inclusion and participation

Our assumptions:

- We can make a real difference in our community
- All people have equal rights
- All people have strengths and assets, and can be valuable members of our community.
- By working to support youth in our community we will aim to reduce youth truancy and offending.

Our trustees:

Our trustees are all voluntary, and come from backgrounds in health, education and business. There is more information about them on our website: www.empoweredlearningtrust.co.nz



KATHY CANE
(CHAIRPERSON)



YVONNE HATHAWAY
(TREASURER)



KIM SHEARER
(SECRETARY)



MERI BROWN



KATRINA WEREN



SARAH MCKNIGHT



ANNABELL LANE

What is our purpose?

To provide specialised screening programmes that identify early, children who are having difficulties at school. These programmes work alongside any services and programmes already offered by schools. This will add value to what schools already offer, and provide additional valuable information about these children that can be used to tailor support and resources within the school and community.

These programmes include:



Screening all year 4 children for visual processing issues (Irlen Syndrome), referring on to appropriate optometric and Irlen diagnosis, then fitting corrective lenses for no cost to the whanau. Irlen affects about 15% of the general population, while the total number of all kinds of lenses fitted each year is at least 20%.



Screening for Auditory Processing Disorder or hearing issues with verified software and referring children on for further testing with an audiologist as necessary. Also, facilitate the use of the Hear Builder program in schools to support auditory processing issues. Around 20% of the students we screen have some kind of auditory processing issue.



Screening children for specific learning difficulties then referring on for further diagnosis and support at school. Support and knowledge sharing for family also.

What results do we want to see?

*If young people with learning and processing difficulties are identified early in their educational experience by high calibre staff in a collaborative approach,
And these children are supported throughout their journey with corrective lenses,
specialised programs, or learning support as needed,
Then they will be more likely to have positive educational outcomes,
Remain engaged in their education for longer,
Have better self-esteem and be more employable,
And therefore will be less likely to make poor life choices.*

How will we measure these results?

1. Achievement data - Children are reading at their age, or steadily moving towards this goal as seen in achievement data from schools
2. Children's learning stories - telling us how they feel about their Irlen lenses, along with family and teacher comments
3. Evaluation forms - filled out by teachers or families about the programmes.
4. Audiologist evaluation forms, plus diagnostic retests after APD therapy using the Acoustic Pioneer program to evaluate Hear Builder impact

Who are our partners?

- Reporoa Valley Schools Cluster
- School principals, teachers and SENCOs
- Cluster RTLB
- Health Reporoa
- Irlen New Zealand
- McClelland Visique Optometrists, Rotorua
- Taupo Vision Care
- Specsavers Taupo
- Ngati Tahu-Ngati Whaoa Runanga Trust
- Reporoa Lions Club
- The Auditory Processing Network, Taupo
- local businesses
- National and local charitable funding bodies
- families and caregivers
- The Learning Staircase
- OPSM Taupo

Where do we work?



What are our programmes?

1. Vision and visual processing screening (Irlen Screening)

Why Is This Important?

Good vision is essential to learning as we use visual cues when learning language and social skills. Many young people have vision issues that are not detected through the checks that are in place, and while they may be able to see, it is the way the brain interprets what they see that is disrupted resulting in a confusing picture for them. This means they are struggling unnecessarily with their learning.

If we screen all year 4 students and provide optometric and Irlen assessment at this age, then we have a better chance of identifying those with issues and can then remediate them early. There is currently no routine screening program for Irlen Syndrome in New Zealand.

How did we do in 2017?

Our Community screeners have visited schools in the Reporoa Valley cluster, Upper Atiamuri, Taupo Primary, Mountview Primary and Wairakei Primary and gave **350 children** an Irlen questionnaire. Those with scores over 10 indicated that they needed further screening.

From here **220 children had an in-depth screening with our community screeners** for about 40 minutes.

Of these 220, **170 students were referred on to the optometrist and then Irlen Diagnostician** for further testing.

- there have been **76 children fitted with new lenses** over the entire project, and there were 2 lens refits also. There are many children still to go on to their appointments : **81 students still to go on.**

	Taupo schools	Rotorua area schools	Total
Questionnaire given	210	140	350
Screened	132	88	220
Referred on	96	74	170
Irlen	22	22	45
Optometric	10	3	13
Both	16	3	17
New lenses fitted	48	28	76
No lenses needed	5	8	13
Refits	1	1	2
Total lenses fitted			78

Figure 1: Summary of Irlen screening results

The results of **referrals from 2012 to 2017** are shown in the graph in figure 2

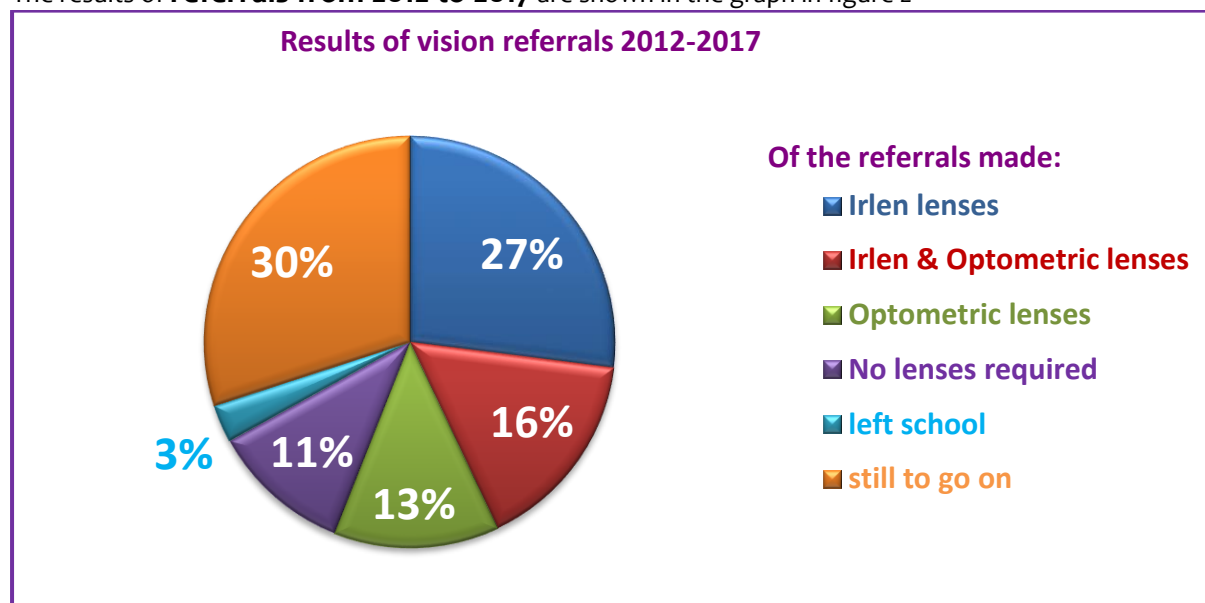


Figure 2: Results of referrals to diagnosticians summary 2012-2016

When we look at the percentage of children fitted with corrective lenses as a proportion of the general groups we screened we see that between 20 – 27% of children in the screened group require corrective lenses of some kind. (see graph in figure 2)

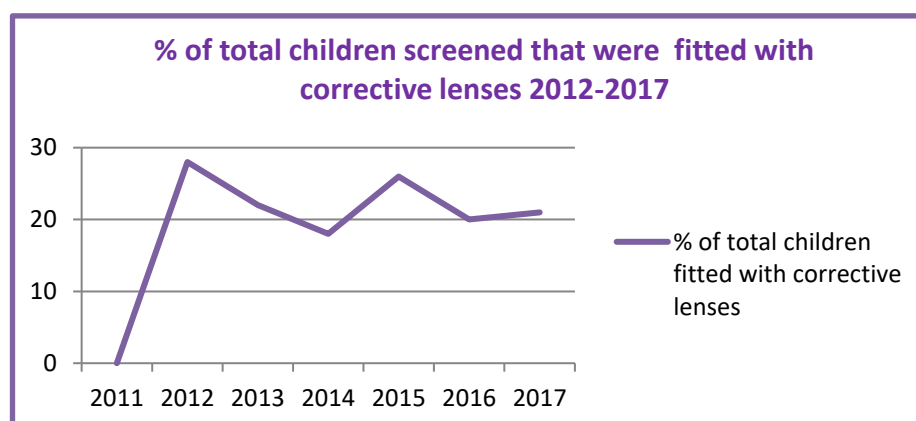


Figure 3: Percentage of total number of children fitted with corrective lenses by year

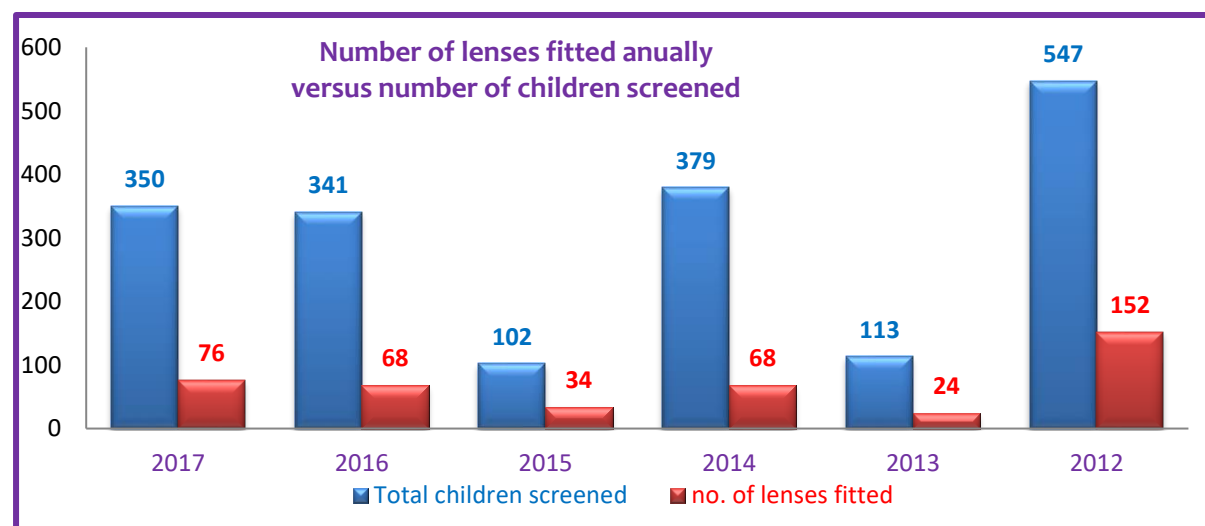


Figure 4: Numbers of corrective lenses fitted over 6 years compared to total number of students screened

Summary of results from 2012-2017



Over the six years we have been screening students for visual issues in Central North Island Schools we have:

- **Screened approximately 1,832 students** for visual processing difficulties
- **fitted 422 new sets of lenses** to children who require them at no cost to families thanks to our generous sponsors.
- **Fitted 25 sets of corrective lenses** and tints for students who have required a retest
- **Supported families** to get their children to appointments by providing staff and transportation. Each year there are a number of families that do not take their children on to referral appointments for various reasons. The staff at Empowered Learning work very hard to help support families

that may be having difficulty attending appointments. There are still many students to go on to appointments this year (81 children), and we are working with the families and schools to facilitate these visits.

What do the students, teachers & families say about their lenses?

❖ Brandon, Wairakei Primary School, 2017



Brandon was fitted with lenses in August 2017. He has a magenta coloured tint with an optometric correction of +0.5.

Mum says that Brandon's glasses are going "really good." "We have seen a massive improvement in his schooling and he wears them every day. He has no more headaches and he is excited he can now read without the words moving."

After his appointment the diagnostician reported: "Everything looked clearer for him and his mother and grandmother were completely blown away. The benefit is widespread: clarity of text, eye comfort, improved depth perception, clearer TV, ability to see facial expressions."

❖ Gabrielle, Taupo Primary, 2016/2017



Gabriele was fitted with her first set of tinted lenses in 2016 as part of a screening project at Taupo Primary School, and was recently re-screened and was fitted with a lighter tint.

Gabrielle's mum noticed that she was having trouble with her reading at school since early on in her schooling. She thought there might be something wrong with her eyes, and went to two different optometrists to get her eyes checked. One said her eyes were fine and the other recommended that Gabrielle carry out behavioural optometric exercises, which she did as prescribed. These didn't seem to make any difference to Gabrielle's comfort and concentration while reading.

One day while she was reading at home, Gabrielle told her mum that *"the words were like water and they were running off the side of the page."* Her mum thought this was strange and started to do some research herself. She discovered some information on Irlen and coloured overlays, and purchased some of the overlays to use at home. Gabrielle really liked using the overlays and they helped her fluency and ability to concentrate.

In 2016, Gabrielle was screened with all other year 4,5,6 students at Taupo Primary and referred on for further testing. She was fitted with an Irlen tint. These glasses helped a tremendous amount with her ability to concentrate in class and also with her netball. Her coach said she was so much better when she wore her glasses.

Gabrielle had a tint recheck in 2017 as she felt like her glasses were not helping as much as they had been in the past. Gabrielle also has dyslexia and finds reading and spelling challenging.

Gabby's mum tells us her story in her words:

"Gabby was having trouble with her reading at school. As number three of four children in a family of keen readers, I noted that Gabby was different to the other kids. It didn't matter how much reading I did with Gabby and how hard she tried, reading out loud was not something that Gabby enjoyed and she tried all sorts of ways to avoid reading practice. I was aware of the Irlens condition and thought maybe that could be what was affecting Gabby's reading but it was hard to find anyone who could help diagnose the condition or give advice as to how to help. I got some coloured plastic with a guide lines to overlay over her books, which helped her reading, but this wasn't supported at school and so the problem continued. It affected her confidence, the way Gabby felt about herself and her enjoyment of school.

After a long journey of visiting eye specialists, behavioural opticians and learning advisors, plus trying to read widely about the reasons why Gabby's reading was not improving, Empowered Learning helped to diagnose Irlens for Gabby.

The difference was amazing. Gabby loves her glasses and can finally enjoy reading without getting headaches or feeling tired. It broke my heart to listen to Gabby describe what it was like to read to the specialist - saying the words just used to run off the page like water. She had to try so hard just to read, let alone learn. We are so thankful to Empowered Learning and the wonderful group of

Mums who did something about helping kids who just need to have the right tools to help them be successful.

Gabby is now onto her second set of Irlen lenses - a lighter version, proving that by wearing the glasses all the time, a difference can be made to the way her brain works. Maybe over time she will not need to wear them at all!"

❖ **Kate, Year 4, Broadlands School, 2012/Reporoa College 2017.**



Kate was fitted with Irlen lenses as part of the screening program at Broadlands Primary School in 2012.

She was recently retested by the Irlen diagnostician in late 2016, and there was no need for her to continue to wear a tint.

After she was initially fitted with her tint, her mum sent us this email:

Wow, what a wonderful few months we have had. We had a daughter who excelled in all sports and maths but who struggled a lot (to say the least) with her reading. Now we have a young girl who no longer refers to herself as dumb and is happy to read and write in front of her peers.

Kate never described to us what she saw on the page when reading and to her, she thought it was normal to see orange flashes of light and the words dancing all over the page. In her words she describes her glasses as "fixing everything" Within an hour of getting her new glasses she was missing in the book section of the Warehouse, not the toy section and when found with a beaming smile she declared "no more rivers in the words mum". I find writing about this moment a little emotional as we have spent hours trying to encourage Kate to read after school, but either her eyes hurt or she repeatedly lost her place which always resulted in an unpleasant learning experience. Thank you for taking the stress out of learning.

Kate has attended after school learning for some time now and just last week her teacher shook her head and said, "I just can't get over the improvement in Kate's reading – it's unbelievable".

Kate now often comes home and reads parts of the NZ Herald and tells us what's been going on. Reading at bedtime has become a pleasure.

We are extremely grateful for the time and care the Empowered Learning Trust had when dealing with Kate as she is very clever and has managed to fool many people when it comes to her ability to read. Thank you to the sponsors of the Irlen project. With your funding, money was no barrier to helping our child. We do hope the project can continue, and that many more families can enjoy the rewarding experience of a happy and confident learner.

2017 update: Mum's comments 2017 about Kate & her sister

"Life before Irlen lenses was not easy for our two girls. Our girls were so brilliant in some subjects and so low in reading and writing. As parents, it was heart breaking to watch them struggle. They had difficulty reading print and the words would appear to move and shift making them difficult to recognise. Comprehension was a big issue, the girls appeared to focus on trying to read the text rather than concentrating on the content of their reading. Their reading was very slow, often skipping words or lines and tended to skim the text rather than read it.

Our eldest daughter Kate then 10 years, would comment about how it was really annoying having those orange flashes of light at the side of her page. Kate also saw rivers through her text which she said was one of the reasons she would squirm and change the direction of her head when reading.

For both girls, any reading left them anxious, tired, irritable and sometimes with headaches. Both girls were advised at screening that the lenses would be beneficial in the classroom and they showed little gain from wearing them fulltime.

Kate appears to have gained the most from her lenses. We still remember the day she tried her first tinted overlay, her head popped up from the page with a huge smile and said "there is no orange lights". I remember looking at her thinking "orange lights, what on earth are you on about?" When we picked her first pair of glasses up she spent ½ an hour in the book isle and The Warehouse and upon returning home she picked up the Herald and began reading the captions. Clearly, she felt very comfortable reading. Everyone who visited got the rundown from Kate on how good her lenses were, doing all these amazing things to her eyes. Kate has been retested and at screening we were told that now at 14 years old it appears she is gaining little from wearing lenses (which she already informed us). Kate has also been SPELD tested showing results consistent with Dyslexia. She is a very social and talented young lady who excels in sports but takes time process things.

Our girls are lucky that their personalities got them through their school days before they received their Irlen lenses - but others may not be so lucky and could be left behind. Please be happy in the fact that our girls

are just a few that have benefited greatly from the assistance they were given and it often makes us smile when we see new lenses being worn at Broadlands School, those children are the lucky ones. Many thanks to the Empowered Learning Trust and their sponsors for giving children the confidence to learn."

Sara with her glasses, 2016



Kate, 2017

2. Auditory Processing Disorder Screening

Why is it important?



Once the ears have detected a sound is present, what the nerves and the brain do with that information is what we call auditory processing. Every listening skill we have uses auditory processing. This includes determining where a sound is coming from, following a teacher in a noisy classroom, recognizing your favourite song, picking up on sarcasm; all of these use auditory processing. There are significant correlations to reading and spelling abilities, language understanding and following verbal instructions in the classroom. There are many areas of auditory processing and therefore there will be different impacts depending on which area is affected. Some children have problems with:

- Understanding spoken language unless brief, clear and simple
- Hearing difficulty against background sound
- Slowness in processing spoken information
- Problems with comprehension, reading, spelling, and written language
- Extreme tiredness after school
- Sensitivity in noisy situations

This can result in feelings of frustration, anxiety, withdrawal and low self-esteem. It is our aim to screen for this disorder and to intervene early before too much disruption to learning occurs. Studies have shown the Hear Builder Program is an effective way to support young people with auditory processing difficulties, and can be used regularly in a classroom environment or at home to support:

- Auditory memory
- Phonological skills
- Sequencing
- Following instructions

How did we do in 2017?

	Reporoa Cluster	Mountview Primary	Taupo-nui-a-Tia College	Other schools	Totals
Students ears checked by otoscopy and/or Tympanometry	102	29	0	0	131
Ear Health issues/referrals (wax removal, ear infections, other)	5	1	0	0	5
Children screened with APD diagnostic tool	124	54	31	4	213
Referred to audiologist for hearing test	47	16	9	1	72
Hear Builder program	80	30	17	1	128

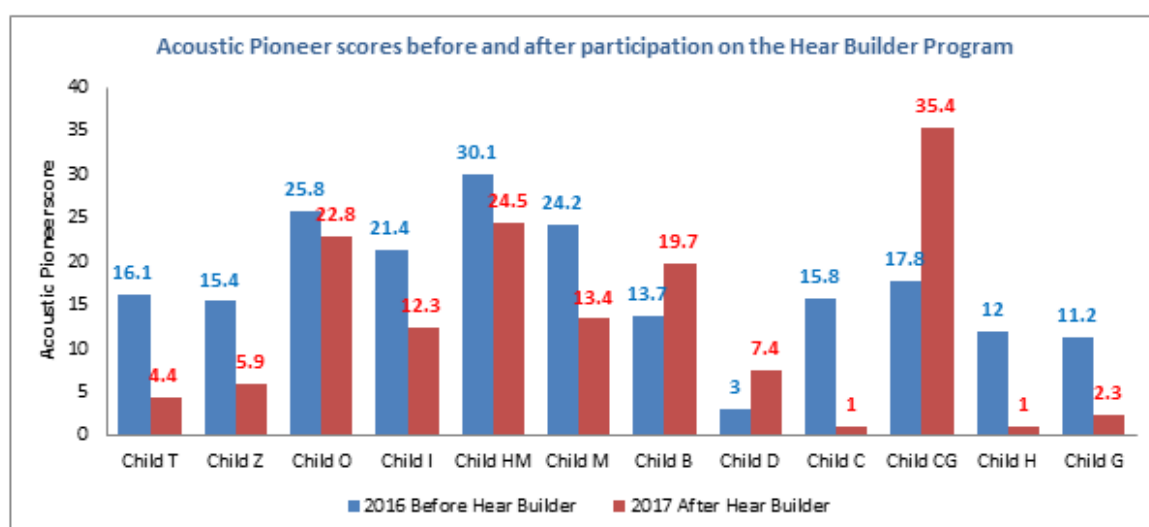
Figure 5: Summary of hearing and APD screening results as at November 2017



Children at Broadlands Primary using the Acoustic Pioneer screening program

- **81 students across 4 primary schools participated in the Hear Builder program in 2017.** This is being carried out at school for 15-20 minutes a day, 2-3 times a week and helps strengthen a child's auditory processing in the following areas:
 - > Phonological awareness
 - > Sequencing
 - > Following instructions
 - > Auditory memory
- **128 students from this year's screening will potentially participate in Hear Builder in 2018 from 4 primary schools**
- **Evaluating Hear Builder as a support program** – 12 students were retested after 1 year on the program. Results below:

Figure 6: Acoustic Pioneer scores before and after participating in the Hear Builder program. High scores indicate more APD issues.



The retesting with Acoustic Pioneer showed that **9 out of the 12 students had shown improvement in their scores.** The 3 children who showed no improvement will require further in-depth testing and support from an audiologist and have received referrals. One of these

children has just had a full audiology test with further referral to Rotorua Hospital for further assessment, and will also require further APD intervention one-on-one.

Where to from here?

- Students identified as part of the 2017 APD screening program will begin to participate in the Hear Builder program at the start of next year. Empowered Learning Trust will purchase the licenses for schools to use and **approximately 128 students will take part in Hear Builder in 2018.**
- Several students have been referred for further audiology and in-depth testing.

Student case study

Audiologist tells the story of one of our students who has been working with her for auditory Processing support:

Last week we did a retest of a teenage girl (14) who has been working with our online APD program for the past 3 months.

Astrid first came to our clinic because she was struggling to understand audiobooks, movies, and what others were saying. She was exhausted by having to fill in all the gaps of what she was missing when people were speaking to her. Her family was frustrated with having to repeat themselves so often. She seemed to be constantly asking “Huh?” or “What?”

A hearing test was given to Astrid during her initial appointment with us to see if she had hearing loss. This was not her first hearing test, in fact, her mother reports they were so certain she had a hearing problem that they had taken her for multiple tests between 5-8 years of age. Her hearing tests had always come back as “normal”, as did her test at our clinic on that day.

At 8 years old her parents decided to take her out of formal education and home-school Astrid, as her teachers didn’t seem to understand why she wasn’t listening to them. Her teachers would often berate her in front of the other students and, for this reason it took a long time for Astrid to rebuild her confidence. After several years of doing self-guided learning, Astrid had become very successful academically, however her “hearing problem” continued.

Astrid’s family agreed to take part in our online training program and she completed it in less than 3 months.

In the first photo, you see her a portion of her pretest results. Red/Significant Weakness indicate very poor performance, yellow/Mild Weakness shows some difficulty, and green displays results within normal limits.

Tonal-Pattern Temporal Processing	mild weakness
Tonal-Pattern Memory	mild weakness
Rapid Tones	mild weakness
Dichotic double-sounds	normal result
Linguistic area	
Word Memory	normal result
Rapid Speech	normal result
Dichotic double-words	mild weakness
Speech-in-Noise (without localization cues)	significant weakness
Speech-in-Noise (with localization cues)	significant weakness

The second photo shows her retest results.

Tonal-Pattern Temporal Processing	normal result
Tonal-Pattern Memory	normal result
Rapid Tones	mild weakness
Dichotic double-sounds	normal result
Linguistic area	
Word Memory	normal result
Rapid Speech	normal result
Dichotic double-words	normal result
Speech-in-Noise (without localization cues)	normal result
Speech-in-Noise (with localization cues)	normal result

Astrid notes:

“Everyone notices a change in me. I feel comfortable and confident to speak in front of more people on a variety of topics.” Her parents also noted improvement through a questionnaire. She notes that she can understand what people are saying as they are speaking and it makes a big difference in her happiness.

Prior to commencing therapy, Astrid answered a questionnaire called an HHIA. This showed a score of 84 out of 100. (A score of 0 shows no difficulty and 100 shows extreme difficulty.) Her pre-test score showed a significant hearing problem despite a normal hearing test result. Her responses to the same questionnaire after therapy showed a score of 38 out of 100.

While Astrid’s scores still aren’t perfect, they show tremendous improvement.

Auditory processing abilities can be trained and improved at any age. We are proud of her for completing our program!

If you’d like to learn more about our self-paced, online, auditory training program, please watch this short video:<http://unbouncepages.com/apdsupport/>

*Client’s name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.

Angela Alexander, audiologist Taupo.

3. Specific Learning Difficulty screening with Lucid software

Why is it important?

Although New Zealand has a good reputation for the literacy achievement of its students there is a group of students who experience persistent and on-going difficulties in literacy. This group of students have particular needs or Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) such as Dyslexia that need to be identified so they can be better supported at school and at home. Literacy is the foundation of all learning so identifying dyslexia early is critical. That way, children can be supported to participate in the full range of social, academic and other learning opportunities at school.

How did we do in 2017?

112 Students screened with Lucid software this year include:

- 36 Primary school aged children
- 38 Year 7 students at Reporoa College (16 had potential learning difficulties)
- 7 students from other year groups at Reporoa College (Special Assessment Conditions applied for by SENCO and approved)
- 32 Secondary aged students (Taupo-nui-a-Tia)
 - > 23 had specific learning difficulties
 - > 8 students referred for vision issues
 - > 31 of these students were screened for APD, and of these 11 had some level of auditory processing issues as well.
- 3 Home-schooled children

Total screened = 112 students

What happens next?

Of the students identified the schools have implemented the following support:

- Special assessment conditions for NCEA exams
- Individual Education Plans designed in consultation with the students, their parents and teachers
- The “Steps” program has been instigated at Mountview Primary to support any child identified with learning difficulties



One of the students tested at Reporoa College said:

“I am really glad that they are testing me... I hope they find something that can help me.”

Comments from the SENCO at Taupo-nui-a-Tia College regarding Lucid screening of Year 9 & 10 students at their school:

Student X, was a year 11 boy struggling his way through NCEA Level 1. Attendance was an issue and having just turned 16 his mother was thinking that maybe it was time he left school. As a result of the initial screening it was found that this student was a very bright boy with dyslexia indicators. This testing helped confirm what many of his teachers suspected and with this information we were able to apply to NZQA for him to have a reader/writer. I spoke to this student after his exams and he was so thankful of all the support he now has. In his words *"I found the exams to be OK because I had a reader/writer."* *"I would never have passed without a reader/writer"*. This student is now coming back to school for year 12 and will continue to thrive with his new level of support and the knowledge that he can do it.

The Empowered Learning Trust staff are a dedicated group who were truly passionate about meeting the needs of students in our school. I cannot speak highly enough about their level of professional, passion and knowledge. Also the work that they do to seek funding for the testing is a huge relief for not only our school, but also the families of the students tested. Many of the students we tested at Taupo-nui-a-Tia College come from homes with limited financial means and would never be able to afford to pay for the testing.

Comments from the SENCO at Reporoa College with regards to the Lucid screening carried out ion their school:

Through this process, they have identified any students who need further testing and undertaken this with professionalism and discretion. These tests range from basic screening tools for Auditory Processing Disorder, Irlens screening, or further Lucid LASS screening- which provides us with a more in-depth cognitive profile. From this point, using this evidence, I am able to meet with whanau to develop a plan of support. Sometimes this has included specialist visits such as audiology or optometry. The Trust generously funds these initial visits and will fund glasses should they be required. They will even provide transport during school time for the many students who are unable to get to these appointments.

It is our belief that the earlier we identify cognitive weakness, the earlier we can put measures in place to help these students in the classroom. With targeted teaching, we can improve their chances of achieving at their full potential. With this testing comes a considerable cost. This testing would not be possible without the generous support of the Empowered Learning Trust who are happy to provide the time, equipment and expertise to undertake this testing for us.

Summary of Results of all screening programs from 2012 to 2017

This table summarises the outcomes from our programs since we began screening in 2012. Our range of services has gradually expanded due to the demands of the schools and the needs of the students.

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Vision program						
Children given Irlen/Vision questionnaire	350	341	102	379	113	547
Children screened in-depth by Community Screeners	220	156	81	177	80	220
Children referred on for further testing with optometrist/Irlen Diagnostician	170	130	55	146	40	180
Children fitted with corrective lenses	76new 2 refits	68 new 4 refits	34 new	68 new 2 refits	24 new 17 refits	152 new
% of total student population fitted with lenses	21%	20%	25%	18%	22%	28%
% of children not attending appointments	46%	25%	17%	34%	20%	16%
APD program						
Children screened for APD and hearing issues with Acoustic Pioneer	213	168	86	1	-	-
Ear health issues identified	5	22	10	-	-	-
Audiology checks done	72	29	12	-	-	-
Children provided with APD support programs	128	85	24	1	-	-
Learning Difficulties						
Students screened for specific learning difficulties	112	81	10	-	-	-
Potential learning difficulties identified	94	32	2	-	-	-
Students provided with full educational assessments	8	6	-	-	-	-

Performance Report

	THIS YEAR	LAST YEAR
	2017/2018	2016/17
Students screening contacts	635	590
INCOME (end of year 31st March)		
<i>Fundraising receipts</i>	11,898	1,066
<i>Grants and Donations</i>	44,500	105,715
<i>Total</i>	<u>56,398</u>	<u>106,781</u>
<i>Receipt items</i>		
Interest, dividends, other	327	263
Withholding tax refunded	51	982
<i>Total Income</i>	<u>56,776</u>	<u>108,026</u>
EXPENSES		
<i>Public fundraising costs</i>		
Events	0	0
<i>Volunteer & employee related costs</i>		
Salaries and wages	32,679	34,374
Staff training		25
ACC	283	216
Travel/mileage	4,236	3,717
<i>Provision of goods and services</i>		
Administration and overheads	5,870	8,870
Accounting and compliance	217	216
Database/website costs	793	190
Irlen NZ tinting costs	14,816	13,924
Optometrist lenses and frames	16,864	13,572
Hearing & APD costs	6,012	10,273
Educational assessments	2,400	1,650
Repairs to building		2,870
Rent	8,050	2,683
<i>Other operating costs</i>		
Audit fees	1,725	1,725
RWT	0	51
	<u>1,725</u>	<u>1,766</u>
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<u>93,945</u>	<u>89,105</u>
<i>Cash Surplus/(deficit)</i>	<u>-37,170</u>	<u>16,455</u>
<i>Capital payments</i>		
Software purchase of licenses		850
Printer	249	

Financial Report Empowered Learning Trust AGM - Based on accounts from 01/04/17 – 31/03/18

The 2017/18 accounts have been audited by BDO Rotorua, the auditors employed by the Trusts accountants Accounting HQ Ltd, formerly known as Iles Casey Accounting . This fulfils the Trusts commitment to the Charities Commission, while maintaining our transparency to them as well as our existing and any potential financial funding organisations. The resulting comprehensive document, the Performance Report outlines the Trusts entire operations including an in depth financial examination, which will be presented to the Charities Commission and available to view on the Trusts website.

The Trusts operating income for the year from all sources including grants, donations and interest, was \$56,776, down 52% on the previous year's income of \$108,076. This was due to the changing in timing of funding distributions of 3 of the Trusts major funders, meaning that distributions for this year's operations were received in the latter part of the previous financial year.

The Trust again received the majority of its funding from grants this year. Although some applications sought were turned down, the continued effort in submitting applications and networking with various organisations to raise the Trusts profile in both Taupo and Rotorua, generous grants/donations were acquired from the Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust and Rotorua Rotary. It is again promising to see consistent support from the Rotorua Lakes Community Trust , ANZ Staff Foundation, COGS and First Sovereign and two new funders from the Taupo region, Waiora Community Trust and 100% Lake Taupo Charitable Trust .

The total operating costs for the year were \$93,945 up \$4,841 on last year and not including capital expenditure of \$249 for the new printer. Expenditure was divided between:

- Staff wages/mileage which was \$37,198, similar to last year.
- Payments relating to providing goods and services which totalled \$55,022 were up \$6,001 on the previous year, reflecting our first full year of office rent and an increase in numbers for Irlens/optometric treatments.

The income versus expenditure has resulted in an operating deficit of \$37,170 for the year.

Payments were met by the total cash at hand at the start of the financial year which was from grants received in the previous year for this year's services as mentioned earlier. As at the 31/03/18 the total cash at hand was \$26,563. Grants received with accountability conditions attached, where conditions were not fully met at balance date, totalled \$4,510. Starting the new year with little funds will require careful management until more grants are secured.

Although there have been some challenging times this year, financially, the Trust has managed to navigate its way successfully through another year despite the reduction in funds acquired. This was due to maintaining our core services rather than expanding on them and highlights that when in a potentially vulnerable financial position the Trust has the ability to manage the support we offer within its means.

On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank all those who have contributed financially to the Trust in the 2017/18 financial year. Without this funding the Trust would be limited in realising its ongoing goals of helping children in our wider community reach their educational and personal potential. Once again thank you to Karen Barker, our valued Trust/ Screening Project Manager, for her ongoing commitment to the Trust, ensuring budgets, funding applications and accountability reports are carried out meticulously.

Yvonne Hathaway, Treasurer Empowered Learning Trust

Major Financial Supporters



Other financial supporters



Partners



Ross Gordon Optometrist Taupo



Iles Casey
Chartered Accountants