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### Great Kiwi Families: Grace Xue

by THE KIWI FAMILIES TEAM

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Our theme over October and November is 'Following your Dreams' and we're so enjoying meeting people who are doing just that. In this interview, we meet Grace Xue - founder of [Lighthouse At-Home Childcare](#).

#### Let's start with telling us a bit about you - what do you do and what are your interests?

I see myself firstly as a lucky mother to 3 beautiful children. Another important role of mine is being the founder and CEO of [Lighthouse At-Home Childcare](#). Lighthouse at-home is an early childhood educational support service to home based educators and grandparents, and we have become the largest NZ-owned provider in our space. My main role in the company is to ensure a consistently high level of service across all our offices, for our teachers, admins, customer services, visiting teachers and educators. In practice, this means investigating and designing research and development projects, creation and refinement of processes and policies, ensuring visiting teachers and educators are receiving continued professional development, training and support, and creating valuable partnerships with the community such as [mainly music](#), and ASB Showgrounds for our free children's day event.

My passion is to do my part to help improve the lives of children in New Zealand and all over the world and my business has allowed me to do that so I find my job immensely fulfilling.

#### Tell us a bit about what makes your family great.

Every mother will say that her family is the best, but what I think makes my family special is the fact that my in-laws have played an integral part in raising our children. For over 8 years, my mother-in-law has been coming to our house every work day to help us look after our youngest child, and we've celebrated every milestones of the children's together. Our children calls their grandmother nana and the strong bond they've developed with each other is just so beautiful. She's almost in every family picture that our children drew over the years!

#### What are your family's favourite things to do?

Our family loved going to the beach together when we lived on the Shore. We love spending time together either riding bikes, kicking balls in the garden, or just being plain silly together. The children love being chased by the "monster" (that's what they call my partner when they play chasing) and our house can get pretty noisy at times. Recently, our eldest son put "talking to mummy daddy" as one of his favourite things to do with his parents, so that was very nice for me to read on his school paper.

#### Our feature at the moment is about following your dreams. Can you tell us a bit about how you've followed your dreams?

My partner and I used to both be in the ICT industry. But our lives were turned upside down when our first child struggled at the childcare centre he was in. It broke my heart to hear him saying "I don't want to go to day care" every morning, so we decided to create our own centre that would really focus on the children's wellbeing. We had to sell our property, borrow heavily and after two years of searching, finally took over Lighthouse Preschool. We made a whole lot of changes to the centre and very soon it build up a long waiting list. During this time, we saw a gap in the space, so we decided to bring our Lighthouse curriculum to the home-based market, that's how Lighthouse at-home Childcare came about.

From day one, we focused on quality and innovation, and put children's interests at the top of the priority list in all decisions we make. Lighthouse at-home has grown from strength to strength, and I believe it's setting new benchmarks for the industry.

Owning a business which grew so rapidly over the first 3 years had its own challenges as we struggled to keep up with demand and infrastructure. Looking at the business now, I am truly proud of all that we have achieved as a team. I have been announced as a finalist both in the [EY Entrepreneur of the Year Awards](#) and the [NEXT Woman of the Year Award](#), which I'm extremely humbled by. I wouldn't want to be doing anything else in the world.

#### How has following your dreams affected your life? And your family's life?

My children's lives are better off because of Lighthouse at-home's educational programme, which is why I started the business - to better my own children's early years and those of children around. Our staff get thank-you letters, gifts on a daily basis for what we've done for their children, we see first-hand the positive changes our services make in those families lives! Seeing the smiles on children's faces, and hearing the stories of happy parents, grandparents and caregivers gives me so much joy and makes going to work every day a great experience.

Lighthouse at-home is about providing quality educational support service to children who are looked after in a home environment by someone else (not child's own parents), which is what my mother-in law does.

Through Lighthouse's program, my children benefited tremendously, and knowing that my mother in-law is supported by a professional friendly team with all the childcare knowledge, gives me a peace of mind while I'm. I feel through Lighthouse, I'm not only able to deliver the best outcome to my children, my mother in-law, but I'm also helping hundreds of other families. I think being able to follow my dream has made me a better woman and better mother. I feel fulfilled and inspired.

#### What advice would you give other people about following your dreams?

Remain true to who you are and what you believe in. You'll be tumbled around and challenges are just part of the journey, when that happens, remind yourself the reasons that you started on this journey and celebrate the achievements you've made on the way.

#### Anything else you want to tell us?

I believe grandparent makes the best first educators while parents are away. With their love and dedication and the professional support they could get from an organisation like Lighthouse, children are getting the best of both worlds. I want to encourage more grandparents out there to consider becoming involved with the learnings in the early years of their grandchildren.

This information was compiled by the Kiwi Families team.



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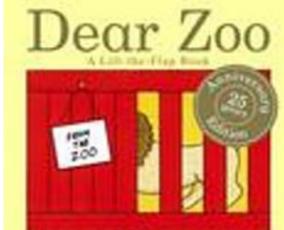
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