

Barnardos New Zealand

Bethlehem Tertiary Institute

Christian Early Childhood Education Association of Aotearoa

National Association of ECE Directors in Universities

The Open Polytechnic

Te Wananga o Aotearoa

NZ Educational Institute Te Riu Roa

NZ Home-based Early Childhood Education Association

NZ Hospital Play Specialists Association

NZ Kindergartens Te Putahi Kura Puhou o Aotearoa

NZ Playcentre Federation

NZ Rudolf Steiner Federation

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

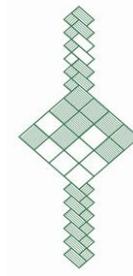
The Early Childhood Service of Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu: The Correspondence School

The Early Intervention Association of Aotearoa NZ

World Organisation for Early Childhood Education OMEP Aotearoa NZ

Montessori Association of Aotearoa New Zealand

Early Education Federation



News Update – 3 APRIL 2017

EVENTS/MEETINGS/SEMINARS/CONFERENCES

The Road Ahead - Research Seminar Series

Dr Helen May, Emeritus Professor, University of Otago

The power of the 'pen' - personal journeys - political stories: Documenting the politics of early childhood in Aotearoa-New Zealand

When: Wednesday 12 April 2017 at 5.30pm

Where: Hunter Council Chamber, Hunter Building, Kelburn Campus, Victoria University of Wellington, **WELLINGTON**

No RSVP required.

Flyer attached

Bullying-Free NZ Week – 22 to 26 May 2017

NZ Students with Solutions – Working Together to End Bullying

From: Children's Commissioner – 2 April 2017

<https://www.bullyingfree.nz/>

REPORTS/RESEARCH/ARTICLES

Reasonable Force? A documentary

From: Marie Russell – 29 March 2017

It's nearly ten years since s 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 was amended, removing the defence of reasonable force for the purposes of correction from our law.

The dramatic story of physical punishment in New Zealand, and the law change, will be told in a documentary film.

The film is being produced and directed by Christine Richardson and Marie Russell – two founder trustees of EPOCH New Zealand (End Physical Punishment of Children) – in collaboration with Shane Loader of Community Media Trust.

The film-makers are seeking financial support to complete the documentary, specifically to pay for expensive archival television footage, and editing. Donations of any amount are most welcome.

View the trailer, and learn more about the documentary and how to donate at the film's [Givealittle page](#). Contact the film-makers at: marie.russell.nz@gmail.com'

GOVERNMENT POLICY and LEGISLATION

Once in a lifetime opportunity to do better for New Zealand children and young people

From: Office of the Commissioner for Children - 31 March 2017

Media release

The Children’s Commissioner says there will never be a better chance in our lifetimes to improve the lives of the children and young people who need it most than with the launch of the new Oranga Tamariki.

Judge Andrew Becroft says the new agency’s vision must make a genuine difference to children and young people in either care and protection, or in the youth justice system.

“For years the Office of the Children’s Commissioner has been advocating for a child-centred approach in the care and protection of children. Oranga Tamariki has been set up to do that so I’m hopeful it is starting on the right path.

“Unless we genuinely seek children’s voices and their views on what’s best for them, we can’t possibly give them a real opportunity for a good life.

“Right now, there are pockets of permanent third-generational disadvantage throughout New Zealand. Not all children from this group experience poor life outcomes. But, the inescapable reality is that a strikingly disproportionate number of children who are abused and neglected, or who break the law, come from this group.

“That is why Oranga Tamariki can’t solve everything alone and it won’t all happen on Saturday morning when the agency takes over. It will take the whole community, other service providers and a combination of government agencies. When things go wrong for a child we cannot just blame Oranga Tamariki.”

Judge Becroft says the organisation must deliver for Māori. “The bottom line is that if Oranga Tamariki does not deliver better outcomes for tamariki Māori, it will have failed. Greater iwi involvement will be vital.”

Judge Becroft says two changes coming into force on 1 April show a change of approach. “Young people will be able to stay in care until they are 18. That is a big improvement rather than being shown the door by the State at age 17. The move to ensure children get independent advice and the ability to air their concerns about the services they receive from Oranga Tamariki is also important.”

The Office of the Children’s Commissioner has a role in monitoring the services Oranga Tamariki provides and will continue to work with the organisation as it transitions to the new child-centred model.

“It’s critical that these services don’t deteriorate while the changeover happens between Child, Youth, and Family and the new Oranga Tamariki,” says Judge Becroft.

“There is a genuine challenge for Oranga Tamariki to improve both the quality of social work and the number of workers, and then how to maintain that over time. These are the building blocks of a great service. We need them to hold them accountable for delivering that service.

“Children and young people in the care and protection and youth justice systems are among the most vulnerable in New Zealand. We have failed too many of them for too long. The new agency must not drop the ball. It has to ensure these children thrive. We need the new agency to listen to them and give them the best possible chance in life.”

Prioritise investing in high quality ECCE for all children

From: Child Poverty Action Group – 27 March 2017

Media Statement

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) calls on Government to demonstrate a commitment to providing high quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) to our nation's children, including reinstating a policy of 100% qualified staff.

A new report from Infometrics, commissioned by NZEI Te Riu Roa, has shown that by shaving money off the per-child funding since freezes that came into force in 2010, Government has saved \$260 million from ECCE this year alone - the equivalent of \$58,000 a year in funding from every ECCE centre in the country.

The report shows that more children are accessing ECCE services and for longer hours. But the devastating effects of political cost-cutting include the undermining of the quality of these services through deteriorating child to teacher ratios, and increased reliance on unqualified staff. A shortage in funding leads inevitably to increases in fees that add financial pressure to parents who are already on a tight budget.

Education Minister Hekia Parata said that the increase in participation was “pleasing” as “one of the best ways for a child to have a great start in education is for them to be in quality early childhood education.”

But the blunt instrument of ‘Better Public Services Targets’ has prioritised participation numbers over quality. Additional funding directed to ECCE services with Budget 2016 has done little but contribute toward the expected increase in the number of children enrolled.

Associate Professor Jenny Ritchie, ECCE spokesperson for CPAG, says that the potential value of these hours is undermined if the quality of these services is poor.

“We know that all children are vulnerable, not just some. And we know that the first thousand days of a child’s life are critical in determining whether or not that child will have the opportunity for good outcomes in later life,” says Ritchie.

“The overall impact of the funding cuts are that they are endangering the wellbeing and limiting the potential of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

“Children’s wellbeing and learning is enhanced by having well-qualified teachers, and retention of staff requires good working conditions, including salaries that recognise these qualifications.”

“Instead of redirecting these savings elsewhere, this money should support teachers' salaries.”

CPAG says it is critical that the Government restores ECCE funding to the levels before the cuts in 2010 and prioritises significant new spending in order to reinstate a policy of 100% qualified staff in Budget 2017.

Funding slashes in early childhood education astounding – new research

From: Te Rito Maioha – 24 March 2017

Media statement

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand (ECNZ) says that, if accurate, new research quantifying slashes to funding for early childhood education (ECE) is astounding.

According to a report by Infometrics (commissioned by NZEI Te Riu Roa) the ECE sector is \$260m worse off in 2017. This is when cuts were made to funding for qualified staff in 2010, and funding failed to keep up with inflation.

‘The quantification of what we already knew, that the early childhood sector has been deprived of meaningful funding in recent years, is astonishing,’ said Kathy Wolfe, Chief Executive of ECNZ. ‘According to NZEI, in real terms,

ECE services are around \$58,000 worse off each per year, than they would have been if funding had not been slashed for qualified staff and had kept up with inflation. This is significant for services that were already running on very tight margins.'

Our children deserve the highest quality ECE possible, laying the foundations for life-long learning. They deserve fully qualified and certificated teaching staff, whose employers can afford to provide them with ongoing professional development. With what amounts to funding cuts in recent years, this has become an impossible aspiration for many early childhood services around the country.

ECNZ is calling on all political parties to commit to restoring funding for a 100% qualified ECE workforce and for funding to be adjusted for inflation, in this election year.

Government cuts cost ECE \$260 million this year

From: NZEI - 24 March 2017

Media Release

New research shows the Government has cut \$260 million a year off funding for Early Childhood Education, as NZEI Te Riu Roa launches a pledge to restore funding and quality to the sector.

The research, conducted by Infometrics on behalf of the NZEI, shows how the Government has shaved \$260 million from ECE this year alone - the equivalent of \$58,000 a year in funding from every ECE centre in the country. The cuts are caused by the Government axing funding for centres that only employ qualified teachers and by failing to adjust per-child funding for inflation since 2010.

"An extra \$58,000 in funding would make all the difference to centres struggling to stay afloat, or looking to hire cheaper untrained teachers to cope with the funding shortfall," NZEI National Secretary Paul Goulter said.

"Research is very clear that ECE can have profound, life long positive impacts for a child but only if group sizes are small and children learn from qualified, dedicated professionals who know how to nurture their learning. Yet funding for this kind of quality has been specifically targeted by the Government and cut.

"At the launch of our Have a Heart pledge yesterday we heard from parents and teachers about the impact the cuts are having on children and about how parents are saying ECE is an issue that they're prepared to vote on.

"MPs from Labour, the Green Party and NZ First signed up to the pledge to restore funding and quality in ECE to the level it was, before the Government's cuts began in 2010. We challenge all MPs to show children they're worth it and sign the pledge too.

"Though the Government keeps saying its spending more on ECE than ever, that money is solely for the extra children who are enrolled. Its time for the Government to be honest about the cuts it's making every year to real core per-child funding.

"The fact is, while some children are getting a great ECE from qualified, professional teachers, some aren't. That's a tragedy for those children, and a massive lost opportunity for the country," Mr Goulter said.

The Have a Heart Pledge, can be found at everychild.org.nz

The Infometrics research can be found [here](#)

Vetting charges will put more pressure on schools

From: NZEI – 20 March 2017

Media Statement

New police vetting charges for schools will end up costing children as the Government's funding freeze forces schools to dip into curriculum or staffing to meet any extra costs, NZEI Te Riu Roa says.

The NZ Police announced today it would charge schools and early childhood centres nearly \$10 for every person they're required to vet. Schools and centres which need less than 20 people vetted will be exempt.

"This is just the latest example of additional costs being imposed on schools and ECE services, at the same time as their core government funding has been frozen," NZEI president Lynda Stuart says.

"The Government can't just freeze school funding this year and maintain seven years of funding freezes in ECE and expect kids to get the same quality of education year after year. Something's got to give and when it comes to education, it's always kids who lose out in the end.

"Principals, teachers and support staff fully support any measures that are going to keep our children safe. But schools and ECE services need more money to meet these extra costs.

"The vetting charges come as NZEI members are negotiating a pay rise for school support staff, which will also mean another cost increase for schools that will have to be paid out of the same, frozen grant.

"Children deserve world-class well-resourced schools and the best early childhood education we can provide them. It's ridiculous that tax cuts are being considered when schools and early childhood centres are struggling to stay afloat."

The Government announced in last year's budget that it would not be increasing the school operations grant this year, in order to pay for new targeted funding for some children at risk of underachievement. The grant is normally adjusted for inflation each year to prevent core funding for schools eroding over time. Meanwhile, per child funding in ECE has been virtually frozen since 2010.

Food Act amendments

From: Te Rito Maioha/ECNZ Members Update - 24 March 2017

We are delighted to see that our continual lobbying of MPI has resulted in Cabinet agreeing to make some changes to food safety rules. The changes will come into force around the middle of the year. Changes relevant to our sector are:

- reduce record keeping and procedural requirements for some low-to-medium risk businesses
- make initial verification timeframes more flexible and require that details about the competency of any technical experts used appears in verification reports
- 'Agree that record keeping and procedural requirements in the Food Regulations 2015 relating to maintenance (regulation 48) and protection against contamination (regulation 74) should be reduced for national programme level 1 businesses, national programme level 2 Early Childhood Education providers and retailers; and similar requirements relating to protection during transportation (regulation 75) should be reduced for the same businesses (except transporters or distributors of food products).'

Showcasing Communities of Learning on an international stage

From: Hekia Parata – 25 March 2017

Media Statement

Education Minister Hekia Parata is travelling to the United Kingdom, to talk with international experts about the biggest change to New Zealand's education system in 30 years.

Ms Parata will share this country's experience with Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako during meetings in London, and then in Scotland at the 7th International Summit on the Teaching Profession being held in Edinburgh.

"We have already had a great deal of interest from other countries in what we're doing in New Zealand," says Ms Parata.

"Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako are part of an innovative programme of work to update and reform the education system for the first time in nearly 30 years.

"Targeted operational grant increases, the funding review, improving the use of data and the Education Act Update are all part of creating a dynamic 21st century education system with children at the centre."

"This trip provides an opportunity for us to share our experience and learn from others about developments overseas."

In London, Ms Parata will meet with Dr Tim Leunig, the Department of Education's Chief Scientific Adviser and Chief Analyst.

"I am also pleased to be speaking at the Education Policy Institute and the Education Development Trust. I will also be meeting leading researchers at the Education Endowment Foundation, a charity finding ways to close the achievement gap between children from different backgrounds."

From London the Minister will travel to Scotland to speak at the ISTP Summit, which takes place in Edinburgh on 29 - 31 March.

"This is where leaders and experts from some of the world's highest performing economies learn from each other," Ms Parata says.

"We are taking a very strong and experienced delegation from New Zealand, representing a variety of views. They include a deputy principal, the Chief Executive of the Education Council, the President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation and the leaders of the PPTA and NZEI unions."

While in Scotland, the Minister will also meet with the chief executive of the country's General Teaching Council, as well as speak to senior academics and practitioners at the University of Edinburgh's renowned Moray House School of Education.

Poverty link to risk of child abuse cannot be ignored

From: Child Poverty Action Group – 3 March 2017

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) supports and endorses the open letter by the Human Rights Commission calling on the Prime Minister to initiate an independent inquiry into the abuse of people held in State care, in order to "identify the systemic issues that permitted this to occur and the broader impact of these events on our communities."

The open letter specifically calls for the Government to:

- Publicly apologise to those who were affected, including those who were abused, their families and whānau.

- Take other appropriate steps to acknowledge the harm that has been caused to the victims and to provide them with appropriate redress and rehabilitation; and
- Take action to ensure this never happens again.

CPAG agrees that the inquiry is indeed the "right thing to do".

It is appalling that the victims of such grievous harm have never been provided a proper chance to recover from the treatment they suffered at the hands of state-provided caregivers, and that their abusers have never been held accountable for the crimes they committed.

We need an absolute assurance that this kind of abuse will never occur again for children who are placed into care situations. With the child welfare system reforms in progress, all care must be taken to ensure that the problems of the past are not repeated and that all children are protected.

CPAG has submitted this week on the Oranga Tamariki Legislation Bill. This is the second phase of the Bill, of which the first was passed in 2016. In its 2016 submission CPAG urged the Select Committee to recognise the causative link between deprivation (poverty) and child risk and recommended that Government take a preventative approach by ensuring all families with children have incomes adequate to meet their basic needs and that measures be provided to ensure that abuses of children in state care do not occur.

In this latest submission CPAG said that the well-being and best interests of the child must be the paramount consideration and considers that the removal of the whānau first clause is a direct opposition to the child's well-being.

CPAG does not consider that the "further specific steps in relation to improving outcomes for Māori children" in Clause 12 of the Bill are meaningful provisions, given that many Māori are opposed to the removal of "whānau first," and the evidence is that taking children away from their whānau and cutting them off from their culture is overwhelmingly detrimental to them in the long term.

"A better way of ensuring more positive outcomes for Māori children would be to restore whānau first and acknowledge the role poverty plays in poor outcomes for children and take steps to address that," says Associate Professor Mike O'Brien, social security spokesperson for CPAG.

Until Government acknowledges the role of poverty in poor outcomes for children and takes steps to address it, its actions will be ineffective in achieving significant change.

See CPAG's submission [here](#), and visit <http://www.neveragain.co.nz/> to sign the Human Rights Commission's open letter.
