

Bethlehem Tertiary
Institute

Christian Early
Childhood
Education
Association of
Aotearoa

Hospital Play
Specialists
Association of
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Zealand

Montessori
Aotearoa New
Zealand

National
Association of ECE
Directors in
Universities

NZ Kindergartens
Te Putahi Kura
Puhou o Aotearoa

NZ Playcentre
Playcentre
Federation

Te Wananga o
Aotearoa

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

The Early
Intervention
Association of
Aotearoa NZ

Steiner Education
Aotearoa New
Zealand

The Open
Polytechnic

World
Organisation
for Early
Childhood
Education
OMEP
Aotearoa NZ

Early Education Federation



News Update – 11 March 2019

EVENTS/MEETINGS/SEMINARS/CONFERENCES

Looking backward to move forward : strategies and strengths: Me anga whakamua

The Institute for Early Childhood Studies 2019 Autumn Research Seminar.

When: 11 May 2019 – 9 am to 4 pm

Where: Faculty of Education, Kelburn Campus, WELLINGTON

Many western cultures, probably all 'modern' cultures, assume that the future lies in front of us and the past lies behind us; they are all separate entities: past, present and future. Māori believe the opposite. 'Me anga whakamua' refers to a deeply embedded indigenous concept of 'continuum'. What if we developed curriculum with this idea in mind, being in tune with our days gone, reflective of our pasts, our experiences, where we come from, who we are—would we be able to move with ease into our futures?

Matters addressed by keynote presentations, workshops and papers include:

- What can we look to the ECE 10 Year Strategic Plan currently under consultation to deliver?
- What of the 'refreshed' Te Whāriki?
- What can we learn from the strategies and strengths (and issues) of the past?
- Is transition to school a priority?
- What alternative possible priorities might we consider in relation to children, parents, teachers and the wider world?

OMEP WELLINGTON CHAPTER – Monthly Meeting

When: Monday 18th March 2019

Time: 6.00pm – 7.30pm

Where: Te Rito Maioha - Early Childhood NZ, 191A Thorndon Quay

"Doing it Ourselves"

This presentation will explore the political and social impact of indigenous knowledge within a Western driven education system. Participants will have opportunities to discuss, share and debate the value and recognition of culture language and identity within a range of educational and social settings. We will explore teaching frameworks designed to support teachers in their attempts to offer cultural content that provides authentic learning experiences for children and families.

Presentation by: Huinga Jackson-Greenland

Teacher Refresher Courses 2019 - reminders

Pacific Needs – Our Perspective

When: 15/16/17 April 2019

Where: West Plaza Hotel, Wakefield Street, WELLINGTON

This course is for Leaders and providers of Education for students with special needs in ECE, mainstream and special schools settings.

A course for NZ educators to engage with Pacific perspectives of how learning support for diverse Pacific learners and their families can be more inclusive and culturally responsive.

Paddling Your Waka

When: 15/16/17 April 2019

Where: CQ Hotel Wellington, Upper Cuba Street, WELLINGTON

This leadership course, designed for existing and aspiring leaders in the ECE sector to develop as a leader, build a cohesive team, develop effective communication, engage with productive conflict and build a problem-solving culture.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy – Unlocking Teachers' Potential

When: 15/16/17 April 2019

Where: Quality Hotel Parnell, 10-20 Gladstone Road, Parnell, AUCKLAND

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: What does this mean? How will my teaching style change? How does all this link to the key documents? Why do I need to work smarter not harder? Download flyer from 'Resources' tab Course Director: Dr James Graham; Team: Prof. Angus Macfarlane, Assoc. Prof. Sonja Macfarlane, Makayla Hewlett, Marie Gibson, Tracy Hopewell, Lyndon Greening.

This leadership course, designed for existing and aspiring leaders in the ECE sector, will cover:

<https://trcc.org.nz/courses/>

GOVERNMENT POLICY and LEGISLATION

EARLY LEARNING STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Responses to the draft Early Learning Strategic Plan – a discussion paper prepared for CPAG by Dr Jenny Ritchie (February 2019)

From: CPAG – 28 February 2019

CPAG associate and spokesperson on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Dr Jenny Ritchie has been involved in early childhood care and education since the 1970s, and has seen our ECCE sector demonstrate some major commitments, attain significant development but also face many setbacks during this half century. Dr Ritchie says that strategic plans are aspirational documents signalling key policy commitments, but finds the recent document is disappointing on many levels. A paper prepared for consideration by those wishing to submit on the draft, outlines some of Dr Ritchie's, and CPAG's concerns, here:

[Strategic Responses to the draft Early Learning Strategic Plan A discussion paper prepared for CPAG by Dr Jenny Ritchie \(February 2019\)](#)

Submissions can be made until 15 March, 2019.

Final reminder: He taonga te tamaiti - the draft strategic plan for early learning consultation closes 15 March

From: MoE Early Learning Bulletin – February 2019

‘Consultation on the [draft Strategic Plan for Early Learning](#) closes on 15 March, and we’re keen to hear your views. Tell us what you think through the [online survey](#) or by sending your submission to early.learning@education.govt.nz.

[He taonga te tamaiti - the draft strategic plan for early learning](#)

TOMORROWS SCHOOLS – CONSULTATION

Tomorrow’s Schools Review – consultation closes 7 April 2019

From: MoE Early Childhood Bulletin – February 2019

The report Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together | Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātitini is now open for consultation. It was released by the Tomorrow’s Schools Independent Taskforce in December 2018. Here it is:

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/TSR/Tomorrows-Schools-Review-Report-13Dec2018.PDF>

The Independent Taskforce’s report is calling for significant change, and before the Government makes any decisions on its recommendations they want to give all New Zealanders an opportunity to share their views. Find out more on education.govt.nz.

Consultation closes: **7 April 2019**

Home-based early childhood education to move to become a fully-qualified workforce

From: Chris Hipkins 20 February 2019

The government subsidised education and care of young children that takes place in the educator’s home or in the child’s home will become professionalised, to ensure better and more consistent quality, Education Minister Chris Hipkins announced today.

Home-based early childhood education has been the fastest growing part of the early learning sector, receiving over \$150 million each year in public funding. 18,267 children received education and care from a home-based educator in 2018, a 65 percent increase since 2007.

“The Coalition Government is committed to making New Zealand the best place in the world to be a child. High quality early learning is a right of every child and their parents and whānau, to give them the best possible start in life,” Chris Hipkins said.

“We’ve heard from educators and parents about the unique place that home-based learning holds, in particular the family-feel it provides, with small groups and close relationships. But we have also heard concerns about inconsistent quality across the sector, due in part to inadequate government oversight.

“Currently home-based educators are not required to hold a relevant qualification, and in fact the proportion of services with qualified educators has declined over the last decade. The Government has decided to move towards a level 4 Early Childhood Education certificate becoming the minimum qualification for home-based educators.

“Evidence suggests that an ECE qualification supports educators to provide children with stimulating, warm and supportive early learning experiences.

“I will work with the sector to determine an appropriate time for this qualification requirement to become mandatory. This change represents a substantial shift and it is important to minimise disruption to parents and whānau.

In the meantime, changes to the funding rates and criteria will increasingly encourage home-based services to employ a qualified workforce.

“Te Ara Tuarua, the Level 5 kōhanga reo qualification, will also be recognised as an equivalent qualification for funding purposes. Recognising Te Ara Tuarua in home-based ECE is an important step towards providing more opportunities to use te reo Māori across the wider early learning sector.

The move to a fully-qualified workforce is the major change coming out of a review of the home-based early childhood education. Other decisions on the review include:

- Strengthened oversight through a beefed-up ‘visiting teacher’ role;
- Giving the Education Review Office the power to enter homes where home-based early childhood education is taking place; and
- More explicit requirements on service providers to provide health and safety training and professional development for educators.

“It is likely that our higher requirements and greater scrutiny will result in some providers exiting the market, or moving to informal arrangements that no longer receive public money. These are most likely to be providers where educators are au pairs or family members, or the service specialises in short-term care arrangements.

“While I believe au pairs provide valuable support to parents, exempting this group would have undermined the intent of the policy. As there is no definition of au pair in the current regulatory framework, an exemption could have led to unintended rapid growth in the unqualified au pair market. This could lead to significant variability in quality across home-based early childhood education.

“Education and care in the home is a valued option for many parents and whānau. Today’s changes will ensure that parents can be confident in the quality of education provided for their children.”

More information about the changes to home-based early childhood education is available on the [Education Conversation website](#).

The majority of home-based educators (70%) have no early childhood education qualification. A small proportion (7%) are registered teachers, while 22% have a Level 3 early childhood education qualification or credits towards a Level 4 early childhood education qualification.

Some highly-experienced home-based educators already hold a level 3 qualification. The Government has decided to grandfather this group for funding purposes.

Home-based early childhood education is part of the early learning sector, and today’s decisions will become part of the Strategic Plan for Early Learning, once finalised. The draft strategic plan is currently open for consultation.

Here is the link to the [Cabinet paper](#).

Compulsory qualifications planned for home-based early childhood education and childcare

Some childcare providers are expected to quit, and those who stay in the business may raise their fees, under a new policy requiring home-based carers to become qualified.

From: Education Central – 20 February 2019

By Simon Collins – NZ Herald

Some childcare providers are expected to quit, and those who stay in the business may raise their fees, under a new policy requiring home-based carers to become qualified.

The new regime, to be unveiled by Education Minister Chris Hipkins today, will require home-based carers to have, or be working towards, early childhood education qualifications at Level 4 in the qualifications system – one year beyond the top high school exams.

The number of children in licensed home-based care more than doubled in the decade to 2015 from 9770 to 20,505, as nannies, au pairs and grandparents took advantage of state subsidies that are available through any agency with coordinators who are registered early childhood teachers.

Forty per cent of the 7500 carers or “educators” care for only one child each, and 70 per cent are unqualified.

However the numbers in home-based care have declined slightly since 2015 to 18,267 last year and are expected to drop further when the qualifications requirement comes into force.

A [Cabinet paper](#) on the changes says many grandparents, especially Asian and Pacific migrants, will not have enough English to get the qualification. They may still look after children but will not get state subsidies.

All au pairs, who are only in the country for a short time, will also lose the state subsidies, requiring families to pay their full costs.

The paper says parents may also have to pay higher fees for carers who become qualified because they will have fewer competitors.

“A smaller market may also result in an increase in costs for parents using home-based early childhood education,” it says.

Fees currently range from zero up to \$10 per child per hour, or up to \$30 an hour for nannies caring for one family.

Hipkins told Cabinet he would consult with the sector before deciding how quickly the new regime would come into force, but would start by lifting the higher funding rates already paid to the 26 per cent of home-based agencies that have above-minimum standards including some qualified educators.

But he said the changes would be “cost-neutral” because the higher subsidies for agencies with qualified educators would be offset by axing subsidies to unqualified grandparents, au pairs and others.

Babysitters and grandparents looking after their own family members are not affected by the change because they do not currently receive a state subsidy.

Marie Smith, 51, who looks after her niece’s daughter and two other children at her rented home in the West Auckland suburb of Ranui, said she would be willing to get the qualification as long as she could study at home while still working.

“There’s no way at my age I’m going to do three years’ fulltime study,” she said.

“I’m on my own now, I can’t afford not to have an income. But if it can be done by correspondence or at home, different story.”

Porse, the country’s biggest home-based provider, offers a [Level 4 course](#) that can be done online over 20 weeks at no charge to anyone with no other tertiary education who qualifies for the fees-free policy.

The Open Polytechnic is also developing a correspondence course that will replace [its existing course](#) costing \$944.

Manukau Institute of Technology [offers a course](#) taking 19 weeks fulltime or two years part-time for \$3000.

Smith has been a home-based carer with Tauranga-based [Jemma’s](#) for 18 years since her own daughter was aged 3.

“It was originally a way for me to earn a bit of extra income, but also my daughter had someone to play with, so she’s had honorary brothers and sisters for a long time,” she said.

She offers parents more flexibility than they can get in childcare centres, sometimes starting at 6am or working until 6pm to suit parents’ working hours.

Parents pay her \$6 an hour for each child, but her three current students are with her for only seven hours, 26 hours and 32 hours a week so she earns only \$387 a week before tax for a 32-hour week – well below the minimum wage of \$16.50 an hour.

A [consultation document](#) last year proposed requiring agencies to pay all educators as employees at the minimum wage or above, but Hipkins says in the Cabinet paper that he has abandoned that idea because “most educators valued the flexibility and choice of being able to work as independent contractors”.

Source: [NZ Herald](#)

NZEI welcomes Government plans for in-home early childhood education

From: NZEI-Te Riu Roa - 20 February 2019

NZEI Te Riu Roa welcomes the Government's plans to require early childhood qualifications for in-home educators.

NZEI President Lynda Stuart said the move was long overdue, as children deserve educators who are learners themselves and a framework that keeps them safe and supports better quality early learning.

"We would like to see targets set as soon as practical for mandatory qualifications and would also argue for greater integration of home-base services with quality centre-based services, to ensure in-home educators are well supported.

"We are very encouraged to hear the the Government plans to use financial levers to incentivise quality, by directing more funding to services with qualified teachers.

"However, implementing these changes within a 'fiscally neutral' environment doesn't help a struggling sector. The entire ECE sector has been severely underfunded for the past decade and this must be addressed if we are to achieve quality early education for every child," she said.

An NZEI survey released last October found that some qualified ECE teachers were paid as little as \$16.75 an hour.

"The budget pressure on ECE services is extreme and reflected in the poor pay rates of qualified teachers. If we are to value quality early education for our children, we have to put greater value on the people providing it. This plan around home-based care is a good first step."

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand to offer a home-based early childhood education qualification from mid - 2019

From: Te Rito Maioha/ECNZ – 20 February 2019

Te Rito Maioha is pleased that the Minister of Education, Chris Hipkins has announced a minimum qualification requirement for home-based early childhood education.

'This move will improve quality in the home-based sector and ensure that tamariki have the opportunity to thrive and learn,' says Te Rito Maioha Chief Executive, Kathy Wolfe.

'We have known for some time that the government was likely to increase qualification and quality requirements for the home-based sector.

'Te Rito Maioha has been working with some home-based providers and educators to help this sector to become more qualified.

'We will offer a Level 5 home-based early childhood education qualification from the middle of 2019*. Our year-long qualification will be taught online, enabling home-based educators to continue to earn while they learn.'

Ms Wolfe says Te Rito Maioha was keen for the government to require at least a Level 4 qualification, believing that this was in the best interests of the tamariki attending home-based early childhood services.

'Our point of view is why we have gone with the higher, Level 5 qualification.

'Te Rito Maioha's new qualification will provide a career pathway from Level 4 to Level 5 study. After that, graduates will have the option of progressing to our Bachelor of Teaching (ECE), which will be of particular interest to those wishing to pursue a visiting teacher role.

'Some of these graduates will have recognition of prior learning, which will reduce their period of degree study.'

Polytechnic reform a chance to improve early childhood education training

From: NZEI-Te Riu Roa - 15 February 2019

The Minister of Education's bold proposal for reform in the polytechnic sector announced on Wednesday could have a positive impact on those early childhood teachers who access their training through polytechnics by reducing unnecessary competition and improving teaching, says NZEI Te Riu Roa President Lynda Stuart.

“Enabling polytechnic institutions to focus on teaching rather than competing for students will improve the quality and consistency of training that those entering the early childhood profession receive, which will ultimately benefit children’s learning,” she said.

The move to reduce competition in the tertiary sector should be followed by similar moves in the early childhood and compulsory education sectors, says Ms Stuart.

“Corporate ownership in the early childhood sector puts profit ahead of teaching and learning, which has a negative impact on young children’s education. The Minister has talked about turning the tide on privatisation¹, and we hope yesterday’s bold proposal is a sign he is serious about reform in the rest of the education sector,” she said.

With a teacher shortage in early childhood education, the proposed reforms also provide an opportunity for better planning and coordination at a national level between the training of teachers and workforce demands, says Ms Stuart.

"NZEI Te Riu Roa looks forward to seeing a more detailed change implementation plan that recognises and respects the current work of staff in polytechnics and provides opportunities for all who will be affected, including currently enrolled students, to participate," she said.

When will the Ministry take action on the shortage of ECE teachers? – Opinion: Kathy Wolfe

While schools are facing teacher shortages, Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand Chief Executive Kathy Wolfe urges the Government not to forget about similar recruitment challenges faced by the early childhood education sector.

From: Education Central – 31 January 2019

With the first term of this school year about to begin, there have been several news stories on the teacher recruitment challenges that schools are facing. What these articles forget to mention are the similar challenges being faced by early childhood education services and centres.

Te Rito Maioha estimates that New Zealand is short of about 300* qualified early childhood education teachers each year, based solely on people leaving the profession.

We have no reason to believe that the situation is any different this year and yet the government and officials seem to glance over the evidence.

We were very disappointed by what the Ministry of Education had to say about the shortage of early childhood teachers when they appeared before the Education and Workforce [Select] Committee on 19 December 2018.

A Ministry official initially said they ‘have very little information on the early childhood workforce’ (Uncorrected Transcript: 2017/18 Annual Review of the Ministry of Education). However, later in the Ministry’s appearance, they acknowledged that numbers on their Education Counts website showed a reduction in the proportion of qualified staff working in early childhood centres.

When questioned further, another Ministry official said, ‘decisions have not finally been taken’ in response to the question, ‘What work is the Ministry undertaking to increase the supply of qualified teachers to meet the Government’s stated policy goals around the proportion of qualified teachers in early childhood?’.

For Te Rito Maioha and its members, this is not good enough and we sincerely hope that the Education and Workforce Committee is not satisfied by the Ministry’s response either.

On my reading, it seems the Ministry has little appetite to make provision for the early childhood education workforce, despite repeated assurances that we are an important part of the education system. Te Rito Maioha is part of an Education Workforce Strategy early childhood education working group. We are concerned that work is not progressing at anything like the pace needed to effect change in a timely way, for neither the early learning nor schooling sector.

Early childhood sector representatives, with whom the Ministry is ‘working closely’, are growing ever more frustrated by the Ministry’s inaccurate claims there is insufficient data on the early learning workforce.

We are confident that the information needed to make sensible decisions exists. Where there are gaps, the working group has for the past year offered to help with additional information gathering.

Enough talk! When will the Ministry take decisive action?

***Qualified early childhood education teacher shortage: Te Rito Maioha estimate**

There are approximately 30,000 early childhood teachers in New Zealand of which approximately 20,500 are registered (2017 Education Counts, Ministry of Education figures).

- There is an annual attrition rate of about 4%. That is, about 1200 early childhood teachers leave the profession each year, of which around 800 are qualified.
- Tertiary Education Commission Ngā Kete figures show there were approximately 2000 Equivalent Fulltime Students enrolled in early childhood degrees in 2017.
- Estimating that one-third of these are in year three with a 75% qualification completion rate, about 500 of these people will graduate in any one year (Te Rito Maioha graduates about 200 people a year).
- This means that on attrition alone, New Zealand is more than 300 qualified teachers short each year.
- This figure does not take into account the number of new teachers needed to cater for the growth in children entering early childhood education and care.

Demand for qualified ECE teachers spurs return to education

Proposals to move towards a 100 per cent qualified workforce in early childhood centres will prompt many experienced but unqualified ECE teachers to get qualified says one ECE training provider.

From: Education Central – 30 January 2019

Changes in government policy will impact New Zealand's early childhood education sector, with a predicted shortage of qualified teachers spurring new training opportunities for experienced but unqualified educators. There is also demand for bilingual teachers, particularly those who can speak te reo Māori or Pasifika languages.

Joanne Groenewald, who heads the school of Early Childhood Education at Hamilton's Vision College, says the ECE industry in New Zealand will grow and more qualified teachers will be needed in the future.

"We are hearing every month of new centres being built, all with different teaching philosophies, increasing the need for more teachers and creating more options for parents and caregivers for their children," says Groenewald.

"Combined with the new minimum teaching qualifications mandated by the Ministry of Education, and proposals to move towards a 100 per cent qualified teacher workforce in ECE centres as well as for home based providers, New Zealand is going to be experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers, unless we recruit more students to the industry," says Groenewald.

As part of the government's announcement last November of its \$3.5 billion early childhood review, the draft 10-year strategic plan includes raising the minimum percentage of qualified teachers in teacher-led early childhood centres from 50 to 80 percent by 2022, and to 100 percent in the longer term.

Education Ministry figures indicate that 57 per cent of all teaching staff were qualified in 2018, up from 56 per cent in 2017. However, in the home-based educators' segment, 90 per cent did not have an ECE qualification.

"This could mean the likes of those who may have 20 years' experience but aren't fully qualified and are working in centres, along with a high proportion of home-based educators, should look to ECE qualifications to upskill," says Groenewald. There were 4,532 licensed ECE services in New Zealand in 2018, according to Ministry of Education figures, with more than 200,000 New Zealand children aged 0-4 attending at least once a week. There was growth in private education and care services (day cares), but a decrease in other service types such as kindergartens and playcentres.

Groenewald also believes the industry is crying out for more bi-lingual teachers, particularly those who can speak Māori and Pasifika languages. This is backed up by Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's (MBIE) Occupation Outlook reporting that says the demand for early childhood teachers who are speakers of Māori and Pasifika languages is particularly strong.

“We have an intake in East Tamaki that is generally made up of students who can speak Māori and/or Pasifika languages, which reflects the demand for the multi-languages in our communities. Our tutors are also from our communities, and speak the languages, so they are able to offer full support to our students,” says Groenewald.

There were 655 ECE services in 2018 that offered either bilingual or immersion language instruction in a language other than English, according to the Ministry of Education. Te reo Māori, Tonga, Samoan and Northern Chinese language are the most commonly spoken in bilingual or immersion ECE services.

Salilo Ward (banner image), an ECE tutor with Vision College, is fluent in Samoan, English and also speaks basic Tongan and te reo Māori. She’s been tutoring the NZ Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care for four years and has seen the growth of private childcare centres and the growing shortage of qualified ECE teachers.

Business and Early Childhood Education make uneasy bedfellows

Peter Lyons says the corporatisation of childcare is fraught with contradictions.

From: Education Central - Opinion: Peter Lyons – 29 January 2019

My worst share market investment in the past few years highlights why the private sector and education often make uneasy bedfellows. It has been a desultory lesson in the inane hollowness of corporate speak, especially when it comes to “valuing our people”. When corporate types preach this altruism, actions speak louder than words.

The investment was in a listed early childhood centre operator. I won’t name names but the value of my holding has declined by 70 per cent in the past 18 months. It was touted as a hot stock several years ago. It was expanding and gobbling up childcare centres around the country. Synergies and economies of scale would drive business success. All the usual corporate buzzwords.

The business has continued to tank. This is despite constant reassurances from the directors that they are “turning a corner” and have a “recovery plan” in action. But mostly I blame myself for failing to recognise the unique aspects of this particular industry.

Even using the word “industry” when talking about the care and education of toddlers sounds harsh. It raises the question of whether such a precious task should be undertaken by profit-driven businesses like the one I invested in. “Industry” suggests soulless factories with chimney stacks belching smoke. It doesn’t conjure images of cute toddlers being nurtured and educated by trained caring professionals. This is likely why my investment has failed so dismally. The corporatisation of childcare is fraught with contradictions.

I have closely read the shareholder reports on the company I invested in. The main reason for their shocking performance has been a significant fall in occupancy rates in their centres. Reading further, a key factor behind this seems to have been high staff turnover. Parents have reacted by removing their children from the centres. Parents want qualified competent caring staff to nurture their children. High staff turnover has reduced the stability of care they want for their children. They have voted with their feet. I don’t blame them.

The company has had to write off significant goodwill causing its asset base to slump. But the reality is that the “goodwill” of a childcare centre is based on its reputation which is created by the employment and retention of quality staff. Mess with that and the goodwill asset quickly disappears. This is what has happened.

Herein lies the problem in this industry. A corporate ethos seeking to maximise profits for shareholders seeks to maximise revenue and minimise costs. The main cost of childcare provision is staffing. But if educated and qualified childcare staff feel they are being treated as units of labour in order to maximise shareholder returns they will eventually walk. The effect on shareholder returns can be catastrophic. Corporate bullshit aside, attracting and retaining quality staff in education actually does matter. Even markets show this.

Peter Lyons teaches at Saint Peter’s College in Epsom and has written several Economics texts.

Response: Peter Reynolds – ECE centres are not “nasty corporates”

Chief Executive Officer of the Early Childhood Council Peter Reynolds responds to Peter Lyons' opinion piece which criticises the early childhood sector for its focus on corporatisation.

From: Education Central – 30 January 2019

Peter Lyon's opinion piece [“Business and Early Childhood Education make uneasy bedfellows”](#) made interesting reading this morning.

Were it not for that interest, the predictable anti-private bias would be sad. Many early childhood centre operators will tell you there's nothing worse than an ERO review headed up by a semi-retired school principal. The lack of understanding of the ECE sector is what drives this concern, and that lack is never more apparent than in Mr Lyon's opinion piece.

The whole early childhood education sector is private. Not bits of it. The whole thing. For the last 50 or so years. In fact, the early childhood education sector is the most successful example of a chartered school model in the country. And the sky is still up there, it hasn't fallen yet!

Mr Lyons veiled attempts to keep the name of the provider the subject of his references anonymous are pitifully inadequate. One can only hope he respects the privacy of his students more diligently.

My Lyons appears critical of the few corporate providers of licensed childcare in New Zealand, but ignores some of the more salient facts that undermine his position.

Specifically:

- There are 4,500 licensed childcare services
- Of this, there are over 40 so-called corporate providers. For the sake of argument, let us define “corporate” as five or more services in the one ownership stable – not for any particular reason, but just to ensure we are clear about the term.
- The vast majority of “corporate” early childhood providers are community-owned, not privately-owned. This includes the largest single provider of childcare in the country.
- There is only one corporate provider of early childhood education in New Zealand that currently trades on the stock exchange and is therefore publically-listed. And anyone with a Kiwisaver account is likely to be a shareholder.

Is the fact that the publically-listed provider is struggling a reflection of the corporate nature of the business. I doubt that.

I doubt it because that would suggest there is no relationship with the many other childcare services in New Zealand that have struggled over the last few years and continue to do so today. We calculated that the average childcare centre has lost over \$103,000 in government funding since January 2011 – per year.

Over the last ten years, government investment in the per-child rate of funding for childcare has been slashed. Inequity of funding policies have crept into the system so that some services are now paid a premium while others struggle. Licensing practices have run amok such that competition between early childhood services has risen to significantly unhealthy levels. 1970's style collective employment agreements pay teachers on the basis of their year's of service, not on how well they teach our youngest learners. And each individual service has over 400 specific compliance requirements to keep abreast of at all times, and the list grows.

Where in this picture is the abhorrent “corporate ethos” Mr Lyons speaks of?

It's easy to poke a finger at the ‘nasty corporates’. Were it not for the facts of the matter that paint a quite different picture.

Finally, Mr Lyons might be surprised to learn that his view of the nasty corporates, along with many other struggling early childhood education services across our sector, continue to do their very best for our children and learners; continue to work hard every day to provide the very best early learning experience they can – spend some time reading the published ERO reports Mr Lyons. These dedicated “units of labour” need support, not brickbats Mr Lyons!

Response:– Nicholas Pole - a system perspective on the current state of ECE

Education Review Office's Chief Review Officer, Nicholas Pole, responds to recent articles about the early learning sector in New Zealand, emphasising ERO's role in driving quality and integrity in the early childhood sector.

From: Education Central – 8 February 2019

Given the recent articles: "[Business and Early Childhood Education make uneasy bedfellows](#)" by Peter Lyons and "[ECE centres are not nasty corporates](#)" by Peter Reynolds (CEO Early Childhood Council), I want to offer a system perspective on the current state of early childhood provision as evidenced by the work of the Education Review Office (ERO).

ERO drives quality and integrity in the early childhood sector through our reviews of early childhood education providers, which are focused on effectiveness and improvement. Also, through our national evaluation reports on various aspects of sector performance.

These reviews are carried out by experienced education evaluators. ERO evaluators are highly trained in evaluation methods and approaches. They have a deep understanding of the evidence base for high quality practice, as well as the legal context and the varying philosophies within the early childhood education sector.

A recent analysis we provided to the Education and Workforce Select Committee showed the overwhelming majority of ERO review teams in the past year included and/or were managed by evaluators with specialist early childhood education expertise.

In every evaluation we aim to engage in a meaningful review process, and make sound judgements about performance and influence improvement. We focus on the quality and effectiveness of services' internal systems for quality improvement and on the capacity of the services to promote positive learning outcomes for all children.

ERO has found that the ownership and governance arrangements alluded to in both the cited articles are not the determining factors for quality in early childhood settings. We encounter a continuum of quality across community based, privately owned and corporate early childhood settings. Successful early learning services are committed to continuous and deliberate improvement and use evidence to identify their direction and make decisions. They effectively use evaluation to ensure that what they do makes a positive difference for all children and their families.

Of the 1291 early learning service evaluations undertaken in 2017/18, ERO found that 75% of services were well placed, 4% required further development, and 1% were not well placed.

Only 13% of services fell into our 'very well placed' category, which indicates performance at the highest level of quality. This is concerning. It suggests insufficient focus by early learning services on improving the quality of provision beyond meeting the standard of minimum or satisfactory performance expectations. ERO wants to work with the sector to build quality of provision so that all children in Aotearoa/New Zealand participate and learn in the best early learning environment possible.

ERO's current revision of the quality review framework for early childhood education is a response to the broad changes in the sector, new research insights and the refreshed early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki (2017). When published we intend this framework to become the backbone for evaluating quality and performance in the early learning sector. It will also be the basis for new ways of reporting ERO's findings to its various audiences. The quality framework will provide a resource for services' own internal evaluation, and for supporting continuous improvement in the sector.

Whanau Ora Review Report released

From: Hon Peeni Henare Te Minita mō Whānau Ora Minister for Whānau Ora – 20 February 2019

Whānau Ora Minister Peeni Henare has welcomed the findings of a review to improve how the Government supports whānau and families to achieve wellbeing.

"The Whānau Ora Review Report – Tipu Mātoro ki te Ao, has been released today and affirms this unique approach is working well for Māori and Pacific families," Peeni Henare said.

“The findings paint a picture of progress and positive changes for families. The findings show Whānau Ora is a successful contemporary indigenous wellbeing initiative, driven by Māori cultural values, working successfully and could be taken wider.

“The review found many examples of Whānau Ora working, and people’s lives being turned around as a result of the approach.

“The report reveals that there is potential for whānau centred approaches to be implemented right across the Government.

“I’ve asked Te Puni Kōkiri to work with other agencies in the social sector to see where the Whānau Ora approach can be implemented. I will report back to Cabinet later this year with the findings.

“I’d like to thank the Whānau Ora Review Panel members Caren Rangi (Chair); Tania Hodges; Te Rau Kupenga; Donna Matahaere-Atariki; Kim Ngarimu and Brenda Steele for their hard mahi.

“They met with 184 whānau, 74 partners and providers, 104 Whānau Ora Navigators, 19 Whānau entities and 126 Government agencies at 19 locations throughout the country.

“The Whānau Ora Review Panel engaged with a range of whānau, providers, and agencies throughout the consultation period and met twice with each of the Commissioning Agencies – Te Pou Matakana, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu and Pasifika Futures.

“The report provides good news for all those involved in delivering Whānau Ora services. In fact Whānau Ora champions, whether they be navigators, providers or the Commissioning Agencies, are uniquely positioned to provide leadership and guidance to the wider sector about how Whānau Ora can change social service provision in Aotearoa.

“Expanding Whānau Ora is the bigger opportunity. This is how we extend the reach of what has been achieved to even more whānau across the country,” Peeni Henare said.

The high level findings of the report are that:

- the Whānau Ora Commissioning Approach results in positive change for whānau and creates the conditions for the change to be sustainable;
- the Whānau Ora Commissioning Approach operates within and meets the requirements of, a structured accountability system and operates in a transparent manner;
- Whānau Ora and whānau-centred approaches demonstrate a number of features that align closely with success factors identified in recent reports on good social investment. The Panel were of the view that there is the potential for whānau centred approaches to be applied more widely across government;
- A number of challenges and improvements were identified in the Whānau Ora Commissioning approach and environment.

You can find more information, and a copy of the report on Te Puni Kōkiri website – <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/whakamahia/whanau-ora-review>

Health Reform a must as NZ tackles a multitude of challenges

Press Release: Maori Council - 4 March 2019

Maori Council: Health Reform a must as New Zealand tackles a multitude of challenges from rising rates of dementia to childhood poverty

DATA DOESN’T LIE:

- New Zealand’s total health and disability spending is about \$18 billion, or about 9.5% of gross domestic product (GDP); this covers spending in the public, private and non-governmental organisation (NGO) sectors, including ACC expenditure.
- While New Zealanders overall are living longer, Māori and Pacific peoples still have lower life expectancies than the population as a whole.

- We expect the number of New Zealanders with dementia to rise from about 48,000 in 2011 to about 78,000 in 2026.
- New Zealand's health workforce also faces challenges. It is ageing – 40% of doctors and 45% of nurses are aged over 50 years.⁸ It also has a large unregulated workforce (numbering about 63,000), including care and support workers, or kaiāwhina, who often have limited access to training. Many of our workforce have trained overseas
- Nearly 100,000 children aged 2–14 years (12.3%) were obese. The child obesity rate has not changed significantly since 2011/12 (when it was 10.7%), although it has increased since 2006/07 (8.4%).
- 1.2 million adults (32%) were obese, up from 29% in 2011/12.
- Children living in the most socio-economically deprived neighbourhoods were 2.5 times as likely to be obese as children living in the least deprived neighbourhoods, after adjusting for age, sex and ethnic differences.

“If we are going to improve New Zealand's Health System then we need to start investing now – Treasury has already said that the current model is unsustainable and unless we invest in better and more formative research around outcomes we will see a lift of the health budget from 7% of GDP to about 11%. And what we invest in matters based on what is happening from rises in childhood obesity to cancer rates, from dementia to the structure of our workforce.”

Were the words of the New Zealand Maori Council's Executive Director Matthew Tukaki at a hui in Auckland this morning and the Council's call for the establishment of a National Future Fund for Health and Wellbeing Research.

“The harsh reality is that we, as a nation, invest very little in terms of research around health and wellbeing and yet the more we do and the more we understand what is happening in primary, secondary and tertiary health as well as poverty and wellbeing in New Zealand we can go a long way to create programs that are more effective both financial and from a social outcomes perspective.” Tukaki said

“The classic example I use is Government Departments and Agencies, as well as service providers, collect an enormous amount of data but for what purpose? Are we analyzing it, researching and understanding it so far as creating better health and wellbeing programs are concerned or are we just collecting it for collecting sake?” Tukaki said.

“We have also made the research environment very competitive like people are tendering for a contract – but what we should be doing is fostering a collaborative research model that encourages people to work together in a more research consortium approach. We also tend to lock out younger researchers coming through which leads many to leave the sector or head overseas” Tukaki said

“Money is also tight and often we see Governments investing small or large amounts of money depending on what the mood is. Then we have smaller foundations and organisations also funding research but often if there was just a little more in the tank the research itself could prove to be more useful and impactful. In other words there is no real consistency especially when it comes to Maori research.” Tukaki said

“That is why we want to have a look at the establishment of a National Future Fund for Health and Wellbeing Research so we can get better co-ordination, better use of taxpayers money, a higher degree of investment in young researchers coming through and a greater emphasis on the dynamics of the Maori Health and Well Being data. Importantly it needs to be the case that a fund commissions research and also is able to ask the research questions that lead to better and more understandable outcomes. Of course it also provides our research community with greater stability.” Tukaki said

“The idea of the fund, very much like the Australian model where an upfront amount of money is invested, is where the principle is able to grow and dispersal occurs through the interest and returns on the investments. In addition it allows for co-investment to occur so private organisations and foundations can make co-investments to increase the pot but also enable them to get better bang for their buck as well.” Tukaki said

“Why can't we more cleverly harness the power of our research community to find ways of reducing everything from child hood obesity (which leads to great health challenges later on in life) right through to cures for cancer?” Tukaki has said

“If we better understand what is happening and why, we can target our investments more towards outcomes. If we are able to harness the collective of researchers we will be able to produce higher quality outcomes. If we are able to ask the questions that focus in around specific challenges and problems then we will be able to get a high quality

of solutions we can work on and if we get the model right we can use research to reduce the threat of a blow out in health budgets in future years.” Tukaki said

In the coming weeks the New Zealand Maori Council will also be launching a new National Taskforce on Health and Wellbeing to be led by National Hauora Coalition Trustee, Henare Mason. Mr. Mason is Deputy Chair of the New Zealand Maori Council and a respected health leader. Maori Council has previously announced the appointment of Dr Gary Hook as its Research Director.

RESOURCES/PUBLICATIONS/ARTICLES/RESEARCH/REPORTS

‘What makes a good life’ Report

From: Office of Children’s Commissioner – 26 February 2019

The Office of the Childrens Commissioner and Oranga tamariki have partnered to develop the ‘What makes a good life?’ report. The report includes the voices of over 6000 New Zealand children, detailing many of the issues that they deem to be important.

Summary:

We have asked children and young people for their views on what wellbeing means to them. We heard from more than 6,000 children and young people about what a good life is and what they thought were the most important areas to focus on to make things better for all children and young people.

New Zealand should be a place where all children and young people are able to develop and flourish. From what we heard, a significant number of children and young people face challenges. Children and young people have valuable ideas based on their everyday experiences and hopes for the future. We undertook this work so that their views can inform the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, designed to drive government action on child wellbeing, but could also be used to inform practitioners and communities who want to make a difference for children and young people.

“Having a good life isn’t necessarily about the materialistic things. I think having strong friendships/relationships with people who genuinely care about you contributes better to a good life.”
Rangatahi from Taumarunui

Key insights:

From what children and young people told us, we identified four key insights about what a good life means, and what we could focus on to improve wellbeing for all children and young people:

1. Change is needed

The majority of children and young people are doing well, but some are facing significant challenges. Almost everyone who shared their views could point to something that needed to change if all children and young people are to have a good life.

2. Family and whānau are crucial

We heard that in order for children to be well, their families must be well and involved in making things better.

3. Providing the basics is important, but not enough on its own

Children and young people want more than just a minimum standard of living. Things such as feeling accepted, valued and respected are just as important.

4. Children and young people have valuable insights

Listening to children and young people’s views regularly and meaningfully is the best way to respond to their needs, wants and aspirations. We have heard that efforts to support children and young people need to focus on more than just what services are needed. Support systems need to accept children and young people for who they are, respect their critical relationships and support the people they care about to also be well.

Children and young people have told us that they want the basics, plus a little bit more. We think they all deserve a lot more. Download the full report below. [What Makes A Good Life Report \(Pdf_6.9 MB\)](#)

[Media Release ‘What Makes A Good Life?’ \(Pdf_180 KB\)](#)