



News Update – 9 August 2019

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EVENTS/MEETINGS/SEMINARS/CONFERENCES

He mokopuna, he taonga? The reality of a broken childcare and ECE system – and a potential fix.

Mike Bedford and Susan Bates

When: Friday 9th August 2019, 12.30-1.15pm

Where: Small Lecture Theatre, Level D, University of Otago, 23A Mein Street, Newtown, **WELLINGTON**

A year ago, Mike Bedford and others challenged Ministry of Education claims that NZ has “among the best standards in the world for ECE”. Against this, they presented evidence of poor standards, poor compliance, very bad conditions, and a damaged workforce. They welcome much of subsequent MoE draft strategic plan for ECE, but argue that NZ’s current ECE licensing system does not promote, and cannot ensure, adequate quality of either care or education. This seminar will propose a solution.

Mike Bedford (MPH) is a specialist in ECE wellbeing and design, and is just finalising a doctorate at University of Otago. Mike has over 25 years’ experience with the ECE sector, and has made about 1,500 visits to ECE services. Susan Bates (B.Ed) is an ECE teacher and researcher, who established the 2,700 member Teachers Advocacy Group. Susan has taught at over 60 ECE centres.

Children, Families and the State: Seminar One

When: 9 August 2019 , 12.30 – 1.30

Where: Old Government Buildings, Lecture Theatre 1 (behind the main building), **WELLINGTON**.

The School of Government at Victoria University of Wellington is hosting a three part seminar series examining the historical, current and future role of the State, prior to, during and after families’ and children’s involvement in the child welfare system.

This is the first of a three-part seminar series examining the historical, current, and future role of the State, prior to, during and after families’ and children’s involvement in the child welfare system.

Seminar One will discuss how patterns of contact with the child protection system have changed over time, describe socioeconomic inequalities within these contact patterns, and use risk-bias framework to understand the overrepresentation of certain demographic groups—in particular, Māori and poor children—within the child welfare system.

A historical look at legislation and the organisation of state actors whose role it is to care for children removed or at threat of removal from their whānau will shed light on two important questions:

- 1) Has there been a fundamental policy shift in the way the state interacts with tamariki and whānau, and
- 2) Could this shift account for the present-day inequalities and rates of care entry we see today?

Importantly, these sociodemographic and system trends are placed within the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Children's Rights—two pieces of governing legislation that frame New Zealand's current and near-future approach to the child welfare system.

Speakers at the first seminar are:

- His Honour Judge Andrew Becroft, Children's Commissioner
- Dr Emily Keddell, University of Otago
- Her Honour Judge Sharyn Otene, Family Court Judge, Hamilton District Court
- Dr Ian Hyslop, University of Auckland
- Grant Bennett, Oranga Tamariki, Chief Social Worker and DCE Professional Practice – Ngai Tahu.

RSVP to lynn.barlow@vuw.ac.nz

Seminar One is being live-streamed. *See flyer attached.*

OMEP Wellington Chapter - August Monthly Meeting

Education for Sustainability (Efs) as a Philosophy in ECE

When: Monday 19 August 2019, 6.00pm – 7.30pm

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

Presentation by Anita Croft

Anita is the owner of Growing Kiwi Gardeners, a business that supports early childhood centres and educators to build their gardening programmes with tamariki. Anita is a registered and qualified early childhood teacher and holds a Master of Education degree. She taught for seven years in the early childhood sector and eight years in the tertiary sector. While teaching environmental education to year three ECE student teachers she realised that if there is to be systemic change to ensure that education for sustainability (Efs) becomes an underlying philosophy in early childhood centres, then student teachers need to be taught about how to engage with Efs in their teaching. This led to her Master of Education research where she investigated pre-service early childhood teachers' preparedness to teach education for sustainability when they begin their teaching careers.

Anita has been part of the group from OMEP Canterbury Chapter who have adapted the OMEP ESD – Environmental Rating Scale for use by centres in Aotearoa. This is a tool that was developed by OMEP World to support teachers in identifying successes and concerns regarding their sustainability practices. This presentation will introduce you to the tool and break it down for you to be able to easily understand and use in your centres as a guide for self-review and internal evaluation. *See flyer attached*

Children's Rights – National and International Contexts

When: Tuesday, 20 August 2019, 5:30pm - 6:30pm, followed by refreshments

Where: Lecture Theatre 1 (GBLT1), Old Government Buildings, 55 Lambton Quay, **WELLINGTON**

It is 30 years since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed, setting out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of the child.

Our panel of four international experts on children's rights will share their reflections on the potential of the international children's rights framework, followed by remarks from New Zealand's Children's Commissioner.

Chair: Associate Professor Nessa Lynch, Faculty of Law, Victoria University of Wellington.

Panel:

- Justice Vui Clarence Nelson, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Justice of the Supreme Court of Samoa
- Professor Ursula Kilkelly, University College Cork, Ireland
- Professor Laura Lundy, Queen’s University Belfast, Northern Ireland
- Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People’s Commissioner, Scotland
- Judge Andrew Becroft, Children’s Commissioner

Making Children’s Rights Real in Aotearoa NZ - Civil Society Seminar

Hosted by Action for Children & Youth Aotearoa with support from CYA & Save the Children NZ

When: 21 August, 2 pm to 5 pm.

Where: St John’s Hall, 170 Willis St, Te Aro WELLINGTON

This civil society seminar is for all those interested in working together to advance children's rights in Aotearoa and will be a chance to hear from leading international children's rights experts as well as to discuss current children's rights issues together.

This seminar is for civil society: individuals, community groups, NGOs and anyone who has an interest in working together to advance children’s rights and wellbeing. It's an opportunity to learn from and meet with visiting children’s rights experts and each other, and to build relationships with others who have an interest in and commitment to children’s rights.

Speakers include:

- Professor Laura Lundy (Queen's University Belfast)
- Professor Ursula Kilkelly (University College Cork)
- Bruce Adamson (Scotland Children's Commissioner)
- Justice Vui Clarence Nelson (Acting Chief Justice, Samoa, and member, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child).

The seminar coincides with the 30-year anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and precedes New Zealand’s next reporting cycle to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, set to start in 2020/2021.

By attending the seminar, participants will, among other things:

- Gain new insights into children’s rights promotion and protection practices from visiting children's rights experts;
- Understand local issues affecting children through a children’s rights lens;
- Develop relationships with others working across civil society to promote and protect children’s rights in Aotearoa New Zealand; and
- Find out how to participate in and contribute to the next civil society report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, monitoring implementation of the Convention in Aotearoa.

Attendance is free of charge – please register via Eventbrite.

Numbers are limited, please register by following the link here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/making-childrens-rights-real-in-aotearoa-new-zealand-civil-society-seminar-registration-66151092699>

2019 NZCCSS AND CNA JOINT CONFERENCE

Tātou Tātou e! All of us, together – The value of relationships in building Wellbeing

When: 27-28 August 2019

Where: Westpac Stadium, WELLINGTON

Tātou Tātou e! will focus on how we can build strong relationships. We'll look at the interdependence of all of us to support wellbeing at all levels: individual, family, whanau, community and society.

- Hear what the Minister of Social Development and other high profile Ministers/MPs have to say about better supporting the community sector.
- Explore how community organisations can build meaningful, effective relationships with the people they serve and with each other.
- Find out how the government's Wellbeing Budget will affect communities and community organisations.
- Explore how spirituality can enhance the wellbeing of older people.
- Discuss inclusion and diversity in our communities. How we can all make a difference for those who struggle to be accepted.

Some highlights of the Tatou, tatou e!

- "Whakamana Tāngata: Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand, learning from the past and present for the future" Implementing the Social Welfare Report – **Cindy Kiro**.
- "Where's the resources for community wellbeing? Supporting communities to support wellbeing" Political Panel featuring **Minister Carmel Sepuloni, Minister Tracey Martin, Jan Logie and Hon Alfred Ngaro** chaired by **Dr Bryce Edwards**.
- "Business as Unusual: The Hikurangi Cannabis Company" Considering the business of medical marijuana and its role in building community in Te Tai Rawhiti as we lead-up to next year's cannabis referendum – **Panapa Ehau**.
- "Changing social change -Maintaining the Why but changing the How we do what we do" exploring the relationship between entrepreneurship, positive social change and building community capability to be self-determining – **Sacha McKeeking**,
- "Wellbeing. spirituality and ageing" – for many people as they age interest in spirituality in all its forms becomes more important a Panel discussion with **Dr Richard Egan** Otago University, **Dr Ofa Dewes** Auckland University, **Danny Karatea-Goodard** – Te Huinga o ngā Pihopa Katorika o Aotearoa.
- "The impacts of colonialism, empire, government and race in NZ today", how is colonisation and racism experienced in modern day Aotearoa **Damon Salesa**.
- "As community-based organisations how are we going to contribute to a sustained response to exclusion and discrimination following events in Christchurch?" The aftermath of the Christchurch terror attacks showed a loving and inclusive side of New Zealand, how can we ensure this is maintained. – **Anjum Rahman, Liz Hawes and Jayden Cromb**, a Panel discussion facilitated by **Mike Reid**.

Join us at [Westpac Stadium](#), Wellington 27–28 August 2019. **Registrations are open now.**

2019 Asia-Pacific Regional Early Childhood Development Conference

Working across sectors to promote nurturing and sustainable environments for young children

Where: Hanoi, VIETNAM

When: 4 – 6 December 2019

<https://arnec.net/>

NOTICES

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (Incorporated) Notice of Special General Meeting

When: 1pm on Wednesday 21 August 2019

Where: St John's in the City, 171 Willis Street, WELLINGTON

The steering committee of Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (Incorporated) wishes to give notice that a Special General Meeting will be held at 1pm on Wednesday 21 August 2019 at St John's in the City, 171 Willis Street, Wellington.

The Special General Meeting will consider the following resolution:

'That the name of the society be changed from Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (Incorporated) to the Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand Incorporated and the constitution be amended according.'

GOVERNMENT POLICY and LEGISLATION

Early childhood education standards too low - researcher

Parents cannot trust the early childhood licensing and regulatory system to ensure the quality of their child's centre, a researcher has warned.

From: RNZ – 9 August 2019

A specialist in wellbeing and design in early childhood education, Mike Bedford, is calling for significant improvements in minimum standards and replacement of the current system for licensing early childhood providers.

Mr Bedford has just completed doctoral research into early childhood environments and is presenting his work at Otago University's Wellington campus today.

He told RNZ he had made about 1500 visits to more than 700 early childhood centres during his career and poor quality was more common than people realised.

"Parents absolutely cannot trust the current licensing and regulatory system to ensure adequate quality," he said.

"My colleague Susan Bates, she has worked in something in the region of 60 early childhood centres, I have made in the region of 1500 visits to early childhood centres. Our direct experience says there is a lot of poor quality out there."

Mr Bedford said the ministry did not have adequate checks on quality and Education Review Office reviews appeared to focus on paperwork and record-keeping rather than the quality of care and education.

He said the sector needed more funding and the Education Ministry needed an easier way to crack down on poor performers while rewarding the good ones.

"We have centres that are demonstrably poor quality continuing to operate on provisional licenses when they should have been closed. But unless the ministry can prove breach of legislation, it's very hard for the ministry to close a poorly-performing centre."

He said contracting services would be a big improvement.

"If a centre is poorly performing for quality or is putting children at risk, then the ministry can choose to no longer contract with them."

Mr Bedford said any improvements in standards would have to be backed by increased funding.

"One area that critically needs funding is the increase in minimum space. We need to move from that 2.5sqm inside, five outside, improve that space, and that has to be funded. You can't ask the providers to suddenly have [fewer] children, they're going to go out of business - some of them - if you did that. You have to pay for that additional space."

Ms Bates who runs the Teachers Advocacy Group for early childhood teachers said the scale of problems in the sector was hidden because most teachers were too scared to make official complaints.

"The ministry isn't getting a fraction of the complaints that are actually out there. Teachers are afraid to complain. They're afraid that they'll be outed, they'll be bullied at work, they will have to leave their job and make the complaint."

She said the number of poor-quality centres could be as high as 20 percent.

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand deputy chief executive John Diggins said Mr Bedford had a point but most services were doing a good job.

"Some of the concerns Mike has raised are quite correct. There are certainly some services out there who do need to address the quality of their education and care for our tamariki," he said.

"He's not entirely wrong, but we wouldn't want to scaremonger, we think that the quality is still very high in the sector."

Mr Diggins said some centres deliberately enrolled fewer children than they were allowed so that they could provide a better quality of care and education than the minimum standards.

He said Te Rito Maioha agreed some standards, especially the ratio of teachers to children and the amount of space provided per child, should be improved.

Mr Diggins said quality checks could be improved, but he was not convinced that unannounced checks would make much difference.

"With any sort of audit, if there's some inherent problems or some underlying problems it's impossible to fix those cracks or paper those cracks within a period of days or weeks before the auditors turn up."

The Education Ministry's associate deputy secretary education system performance Damian Edwards said the government's draft strategic plan for early learning included recommendations aimed at lifting the quality of early learning and ensuring regulatory settings were in line with best practice.

"It seeks to address many of the issues Mr Bedford has raised, including teacher qualifications, group size, physical environments, and environmental factors," Mr Edwards said.

No longer world-leading?

Mr Bedford has challenged the Education Ministry over past statements asserting that New Zealand had a high-quality early childhood system.

In 2015 it said New Zealand's standards for early childhood education were among the highest in the world, and the country was in the top three for teacher qualifications and for the ratio of teachers to children.

In 2016 it said 98 percent of services met licensing standards.

Mr Edwards from the ministry said two of the statements were true at the time they were made, but it could not verify whether the level of teacher qualifications was in the top three.

He said the ministry had not made any of those statements for some time.

Mr Bedford said the percentage of qualified teachers might be among the highest in the world, but the other statements were not true at the time they were made and were not true now.

He said New Zealand's standards for the physical environment in early childhood services were among the worst in the developed world and its teacher ratios were not among the best.

He said the ministry should not have claimed that 98 percent of centres met licensing standards because centres were not monitored closely enough to ensure that was true.

Allocation of new learning support coordinators based on the needs of bureaucracy, not of children

From: NZEI 2 August 2019

The allocation of 623 Learning Support Coordinators to around 1000 schools announced today is based on the Ministry of Education's needs, not children's needs, NZEI Te Riu Roa says.

NZEI Te Riu Roa President Lynda Stuart says while any new resource for children with additional learning needs is welcome, the Ministry's allocation failed the test of whether it would get to the children who needed it most first.

"There will be many disappointed parents and schools around the country today. The Ministry's allocation decision is explicitly and primarily based on whether schools are 'in the three most advanced stages' of the Ministry's Learning Support 'delivery model', not on how many students are on a school's special needs register or how inclusive a school is."

"This could have been avoided if the Ministry consulted with unions and the sector before implementing the new roles," she said.

"Putting arbitrary system requirements ahead of what schools have said they want and need to meet the needs of children is disgraceful. The Government needs to urgently guarantee the next tranche of these roles and to ensure they are based in school communities facing the biggest challenges and who desperately need the resource."

She said that in a time of severe teaching shortages, it might also be difficult to attract people into the Learning Support Coordinator role as it had no additional remuneration attached to it.

"The role carries enormous responsibilities and requires considerable expertise and experience. Similar roles in communities of learning attract substantial allowances, so as the union representing primary teachers we are concerned people taking on these roles will not receive the recognition they deserve."

Pay parity for all ECE teachers, not just kindergarten teachers

The early childhood education (ECE) sector argues that pay parity with primary school teachers should be extended to all ECE teachers, not just those working in kindergartens.

From: Education Central – 30 July 2019

After much negotiation, NZEI Te Riu Roa's kindergarten teacher members voted to accept a settlement of their collective agreement that retains pay parity with their primary colleagues.

Lead negotiator for the union Virginia Oakly says that while she's happy kindergarten teachers have achieved a

significant pay increase, the hard work must continue in order to improve pay and conditions for the rest of the early childhood sector.

“We’re really pleased that kindergarten teachers have achieved a pay increase and have retained pay parity with primary and secondary teachers. We do still need to address pay rates and work conditions across the wider early childhood sector and we’ll continue working toward that as well as looking at opportunities to address workload and wellbeing in other forums,” she says.

There are currently 654 kindergartens and another 2584 ECE centres operating in education and care.

Kathy Wolfe, Chief Executive of Te Rito Maioha, Early Childhood New Zealand says there is a real risk that teachers will be enticed to shift to kindergartens creating an even further challenge in attracting and retaining teachers in the rest of the sector.

“It is great the kindergarten teachers have maintained pay parity with primary school teachers. However, this will create disparity with the rest of the early childhood sector.

Wolfe says the sector is already facing significant shortages and attention needs to turn to attracting more people to the ECE workforce.

“One way to do that is to ensure all ECE qualified teachers, not just those working at kindergartens, are paid at the same level as their primary school peers. After all, the degree qualifications held by kindergarten teachers and qualified teachers in the rest of the ECE sector are the same. Receiving equitable pay will show ECE qualified teachers that they are valued as an integral part of New Zealand’s education system.

“We are advocating that greater investment is required to both attract more people into the ECE teaching profession, and to retain them once qualified. People who have put in the time and effort required to become qualified in ECE teaching should be properly paid, and ECE services must have the money to support their teachers’ ongoing professional learning and development (PLD), after all a teacher is a teacher is a teacher.

“Government subsidies need to increase for the entire sector, otherwise ECE centres will struggle to maintain high quality education for our youngest and precious citizens. The 1.8% increase to funding announced in the budget that the Minister repeatedly refers to does not nearly meet the cost increases of employing highly qualified and experienced teachers. Who is impacted by this the most? Our tamariki and their whanau!”

NZEI Te Riu Roa is currently [progressing pay equity claims](#) for other early childhood teachers in the sector. The union says this is the best way to address the historic undervaluing of early childhood teaching.

ECE survey expected to reveal workforce shortages

The Opposition is surveying Early Childhood Education services in an effort to understand the extent of workforce shortages in the sector.

From: NZ Herald – 24 July 2019

National’s spokesperson for Early Childhood Education Nicola Willis has launched a survey to reveal the extent of teacher shortages in early childhood education services.

“I regularly visit Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres and talk with teachers, owners and parents about the issues in the sector. The number one concern I’m faced with is the dire and growing shortage of qualified teachers to staff our ECE services.

“This is putting pressure on ECE centres with some experiencing problems including struggling to replace staff, being forced to rely on relievers, growing teacher to child ratios, and employing fewer qualified staff.

“This survey is designed to provide objective data to back-up the picture those in the sector can already see. We are

facing major teacher shortages in ECE. We need the Government to front-up to this challenge, with short and long-term measures.

"I know many Kiwis are concerned about the impact this has on the quality of education their children are receiving, with recent reports showing a large increase in the number of complaints the Ministry of Education is receiving about ECE centres.

"When I asked Education Minister Chris Hipkins about this shortage, he has said the Ministry of Education does not have a clear picture of the ECE workforce.

"The Government campaigned on increasing funding for a 100 per cent qualified workforce and lower teacher to child ratios. It is failing to deliver on these promises and instead has overseen the opposite, with centres struggling more than ever to find teachers.

"Parents want to be sure their children are getting the best education they can, especially in those early developmental years. The Government should be taking workforce shortages in ECE seriously.

"I encourage all involved in ECE in some way to take the survey and to share your views on how these challenges can be addressed. The more responses the better.

The survey can be found [HERE](#).

Children fall further behind as transformational change is yet to come

From: CPAG - 24 July 2019

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) is heartened by the commentary from Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in conversation with Jack Tame on TVNZ's Q&A this past Monday.

"It's good to hear the Prime Minister acknowledge what a huge job it is to reduce poverty and provide the housing infrastructure families need," says Janfrie Wakim, CPAG Co-Convenor.

"We trust that this means the Government will ramp up its efforts to reverse three decades of neglect, by adopting many of the urgent recommendations made by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group."

We agree that the Government's goals for child poverty reduction are ambitious, but CPAG is very concerned about the delays in providing meaningful change to the 174,000 children living in households where income falls below the lowest, 40% after housing costs (AHC) poverty measure.

"While household income for some families will be lifted over the 50% line through the Government's Families Package, the children living in the hardest of situations just fall further behind," says Associate Professor Susan St John, CPAG's Economics Advisor.

"The lift in threshold for maximum Working for Families tax credits will have greatly helped families earning close to or above the new threshold of \$42,700, but families on very low incomes are not so lucky," says St John.

"Families whose primary income is from a main benefit are still denied \$72.50 per week of Working for Families for their children. Other low-income families may also miss out because they fail the strict hours of paid work test. This \$72.50 per week extra could make all the difference to their children.

"As rent prices increase, and other costs of living surge, these families are at risk of falling further and further behind and amassing more debt just to survive. Core benefits have become out of touch with real living costs. Indexing benefits to wages in the future maybe a good policy in itself, but does nothing to restore adequacy."

The Prime Minister has indicated that child well-being is a foremost priority for her Government, but the transformational change that is needed to achieve it for New Zealand's worst-off children is yet to be seen.

CPAG says to address urgent need, all low-income families must be given immediate access to the full Working

For Families tax credits. Work-based criteria are discriminatory and harmful to children.

This would cost one-tenth of the cost of all the WEAG recommendations and should be seen as the critical first step to provide families the emergency support they desperately need.

The next step should be to increase all benefits substantially.

"CPAG would love the opportunity to discuss these policies with the Prime Minister prior to the release of the very important Cabinet Paper on welfare reforms to be released soon," says Wakim.

CPAG has joined with [ActionStation Aotearoa](#) calling on the Government to urgently implement the WEAG recommendations. View and sign the petition [here](#), supporting welfare reforms that will assure well-being for all children and whānau.

<https://www.cpag.org.nz/news/children-fall-further-behind-as-transformational/>

Kindergarten teachers to vote on proposed settlement

From: NZEI - 16 July 2019

NZEI Te Riu Roa's kindergarten teacher members will vote on a proposed settlement to their collective agreement after four days of negotiations with the Ministry of Education and kindergarten employers.

Lead negotiator Virginia Oakly says that the negotiation team worked hard to press their claims, and it's now up to members to decide whether to accept the offer.

"The proposed settlement certainly doesn't address all our claims, particularly around workload, expertise allowances and better career pathways. However, it does include parity with the compulsory sector and the pay increases that primary teachers fought very long and hard for. It will be up to members to decide whether that is enough to settle for, or if they want to fight on," she said.

The proposed settlement includes:

- Pay parity with primary and secondary school teachers, delivering the same pay increases and unified pay scale primary teachers accepted in their settlement
 - An increase to head teacher and senior teacher pay, including incorporating the head teacher allowance into the pay rate
 - A one-off payment of \$1500 (pro-rated for part-timers) for teachers who were NZEI Te Riu Roa members on 12 July 2019
 - A commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi
 - Refreshment and lunch breaks to reflect the updated legislation
-

Childcare fees may rise as relief teachers' pay soars above \$45 an hour in Auckland

Childcare companies warn that they may have to raise fees to cover wage costs which have soared above \$45 an hour for relief teachers in Auckland, as a desperate teacher shortage bites.

From: NZ Herald – 9 July 2019

Childcare companies warn that they may have to raise fees to cover wage costs which have soared above \$45 an hour for relief teachers in Auckland, as a desperate teacher shortage bites.

Four early childhood sector groups have asked for an urgent meeting with Education Minister Chris Hipkins to ask for extra money to cover their rising costs, and say that if they don't get it they will have to raise fees for parents.

Early Childhood Council chief executive Peter Reynolds said centres were being forced to pay \$45 to \$49 an hour to get relief teachers – way over the top of the [normal pay scale](#) for early childhood teachers with degrees, which is

\$67,302 a year or \$32 an hour.

Katy Brown of The Learning Centre in Ellerslie said last year that she was paying qualified teachers [\\$24 to \\$28 an hour](#), and was being forced to pay more.

But centres are bracing for even bigger pay demands flowing on from talks this week over pay for kindergarten teachers. Their union, the NZ Educational Institute, is seeking an 11 per cent pay rise over three years to catch up with [primary teachers' pay increases](#) that took effect from July 1.

“For parents, all they see at some point is that their costs have increased,” Reynolds warned. “It’s very rarely by choice, it’s more by necessity.”

Unlike public schools and kindergartens, most childcare centres operate in a free market where the wages are set by supply and demand – and right now the shortage of supply of teachers means they can set their own terms.

“At the moment in Auckland, if you want to have a reliever, you are paying \$45 to \$49 an hour, and the reliever will come and say, ‘I’m not going to do any paperwork’,” Reynolds said. “The paperwork will still have to be done, so someone else has to do it, but we are being pressured into paying those sorts of rates simply because there is a shortage.”

He said some centres were being forced to close at times when they couldn’t get enough qualified staff to maintain their required staffing ratios.

He declined to name those centres without their permission or even to say how many had been affected.

“It would be wrong for me to put a number to it, but it’s an increasing number,” he said. “There are some services that are closing permanently. There are services being monitored by the Ministry of Education that are being told they are breaching the regulations, therefore their licence will be pulled.”

He said a recent survey of his members found that centres were taking an average of more than 100 days to fill each teaching vacancy.

He said early childhood education (ECE) funding was topped up after every pay increase for kindergarten teachers up to 2011, but funding was not lifted after two subsequent kindergarten pay rises of 4 per cent and one of 0.38 per cent.

An NZEI spokeswoman said kindergarten teachers had a unified pay scale with primary and secondary teachers before this month’s pay rises for school teachers, and were now seeking to keep up with their school colleagues.

“In terms of what that means for percentage increases, essentially it’s the same as what primary teachers got, an immediate bump to catch them up to the unified pay scale – lumpy but on average a 5 per cent increase across the steps, then two 3 per cent increases to the base scale in the years following that,” she said.

The school teachers’ pay claims were costed at \$1.5 billion over four years, yet Reynolds said the Budget lifted early childhood funding by only 1.8 per cent from next January.

“That’s woefully insufficient to match a 17 to 23 per cent funding drop [per student hour] over the last 10 years.”

Hipkins acknowledged that there was “a clear tightening of teacher supply in the early learning sector, although the impact on individual services is not known to the Ministry of Education as most services operate independently”.

“I’ve recently met with representatives of the sector and have invited them to present me with a detailed breakdown of the key issues as a means of facilitating further talks,” he said.

“Overall, the Government wants a more planned approach to establishing new services, greater support and increased monitoring. We are working on a workforce strategy for education to build a strong, culturally competent education workforce that drives a world-leading, learner focused, education system for the future.

“More immediately, we’ve put ECE teachers on the skills shortage list and invested \$135 million into attracting more teachers, which includes increased funding rates for ECE teacher training providers.”

Half of children on benefits are food insecure, and need urgent support increases, says CPAG

From: CPAG - 09 July 2019

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) says that the number of children living in households regularly going without sufficient healthy food is unacceptable, especially when healthy food is plentiful in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

A recent publication from the Ministry of Health reported that one in five children in New Zealand - between 161,000 and 188,000 - regularly experience food insecurity, while more than half of children supported by a main benefit are regularly food insecure.

CPAG says the connection between food insecurity and a lack of adequate income is undeniable, and it's past time for Government to reverse the damage of the broken welfare system it has inherited. It is also important to consider the context of the data being taken from the 2015-2016 survey period.

The picture in 2019 is of increasing numbers of people lining up for food parcel assistance from Work and Income offices, the Auckland City Mission, or the Salvation Army, among many others.

The Auckland City Mission reported in August 2018 that the number of families requesting food parcels had reached the highest in City Mission's history.

"The latest figures show that there has been a 44% increase in food parcels from the ACM over the past year," says Helen Robinson, General Manager of Social Services at the Auckland City Mission.

"What we are seeing is that neither benefits or the minimum wage provide sufficient income for a family to meet all their needs, which is why we need a much more supportive and responsive welfare system."

While at the heart of this problem there is a lack of affordable, secure housing solutions, with low-income families often having to spend more than 50% of their income on housing, incomes are just far too low.

CPAG is concerned that children who live in food insecure households are at risk of undernourishment through lack of healthy food, relying on cheap, heavily flavoured fillers such as those Dr Rebekah Graham lists: \$1 pasta, \$1 loaves of bread, and instant noodles. This type of diet is linked to other adverse health impacts for children, and can be hazardous for their mental and physical development.

"We are also very concerned that families are waiting far too long for meaningful relief from the serious poverty many experience," says Associate Professor Susan St John, Economics Advisor for CPAG.

CPAG was disappointed by the initial response by the Government to the Welfare Expert Advisory Group's recommendations, saying that announcements did not signal the courageous, transformational change that CPAG and many others had hoped for.

"Benefits have been indexed only to prices since the drastic cuts of 1991, and the abatement threshold for earned income has not moved in decades," says St John. "From 2020 benefits will be linked to wages at last, but they will not be increased as they so badly need to be. The earned income threshold is to be only marginally increased.

"A complete reset of the benefit system is needed to raise living standards of those on benefits to level that means they can survive without private charity and loan sharks."

CPAG says benefits need to be substantially increased, and the full Working for Families paid to all low-income families immediately so that all children can enjoy a healthy life.

"It is too late to wait for the response to WEAG. An emergency package is urgently needed before Christmas for all low-income families," says St John.

For more information download CPAG's 2018 paper "**What will it take to have a welfare system that is fit for families in the 21st century?**"

Children's sector welcomes Government's human rights commitment

From: Childwellbeing Network – 8 July 2019

ACYA, CPAG, IHC and Save the Children NZ have issued a joint press release on the Government's decision to accept the majority of recommendations affecting children made under New Zealand's third periodic review. The UPR process has provided a solid platform for continuing to advance and protect children's rights in Aotearoa.

You can read the joint press release here:

<https://ihc.org.nz/childrens-sector-welcomes-governments-human-rights-commitment>

Also, the Chief Human Rights Commissioner, Mr Hunt, has also welcomed the government's response saying they signalled the need for Aotearoa to address serious economic and social human rights issues. You can find out more about what the Chief Commissioner said and follow the link to the UPR recommendations here:

<https://www.hrc.co.nz/news/new-zealand-needs-address-serious-economic-and-social-human-rights-issues/>

And the thematic children's report is available here: <http://www.acya.org.nz/news-and-events/july-19th-2018>

RESOURCES/PUBLICATIONS/ARTICLES/RESEARCH/REPORTS

Polytech mega-merger: the benefits, risks and challenges

Roger Smyth continues his critique of the Review of Vocational Education (ROVE) with a discussion on the Government's decision to merge New Zealand's 16 polytechnics into a single national institute.

From: Education Central – 8 August 2019

One of the challenges the government faced in thinking about the future of New Zealand's vocational education system was the state of the polytechnic network. Modelling for the TEC showed that the polytechnic network recorded a collective financial deficit in 2017, with more than half the polytechnics likely to record deficits in 2018. At the same time, the strong employment market meant that polytechnic enrolments had fallen and were expected to fall further – cramping opportunities for institutions to trade their way out of financial problems.

The viability of the polytechnics got in the way of the reform of vocational education. The wider review of vocational education (RoVE) had been signaled as part of the government's education conversation, a set of 16 major workstreams that aim to transform many features of the education system. Eventually, in December 2018, the government decided to integrate work on improving the polytechnics with the broader review of vocational education. But the sustainability of the polytechnics became an important part of the context for RoVE.

Continue reading here: <https://educationcentral.co.nz/polytech-mega-merger-the-benefits-risks-and-challenges/>

Meeting the unmet need: rolling out the Learning Support Action Plan

The sector has questioned the way the Ministry of Education has allocated the first tranche of Learning Support Coordinators, but Associate Education Minister Tracey Martin says all of New Zealand will have coverage.

By Jude Barback.

From: Education Central – 6 August 2019

It is 6pm on a Tuesday night. The board of trustees is gathered for its monthly meeting. Joining tonight's meeting is the school's SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator) who will report to the board on the school's special education programme.

The report includes an update on the school's four ORS-funded students; all are doing well with the extra support. But the SENCO expresses her disappointment for a sizeable group of students operating just below the academic levels of the ORS students. These children are not able to access the curriculum without support, yet no funding has been approved for them. Just two students of nine applicants have been granted In-Class Support funding. With just 130 funded spots "up for grabs" in the area, she's done well to secure two of these spots.

The board members look tense. It is painfully obvious that in the absence of sufficient funding they will need to budget for propping up the school's learning support programme. But they have already committed to a number of other major costly projects, so it's not going to be easy.

Learning Support Action Plan

Variations of the above scenario are likely to be playing out all over New Zealand. SENCOs everywhere are trying to stretch their limited resourcing across a large pool of children who need it. Boards are scratching their heads about how they can help.

Associate Education Minister Tracey Martin is very aware of the scale of the problem.

"One in five children, around 200,000, need some kind of extra support for their learning. This is part of the natural variability among children and young people in every learning environment," she says.

"Feedback from across the education and disability sectors, as well as from parents and whānau and students themselves, has been very clear that we need to do a better job of helping these young people and meeting their diverse needs."

The recently announced Learning Support Action Plan aims to do just that – a better job of supporting kids who need that support. Starting now and over the next five years, the plan will aim to develop new screening tools to help identify learning support needs early on and strengthen early intervention for pre-schoolers. The plan will also aim to better meet the needs of neurodiverse children, gifted children and those at risk of disengaging. But the top priority for the plan is to introduce the first tranche of Learning Support Coordinators (previously referred to as SENCOs) in schools.

Allocation of Learning Support Coordinators

The sector was pleased at the prospect of injecting 600 Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) into the system – if a little dubious about how it would be achieved at a time when there is a shortage of teachers. Everyone agrees the SENCO role, often assumed by an already over-burdened senior staff member and in some schools entirely absent, should no longer be just an add-on or a nice-to-have in schools.

And so it was with anticipation that schools opened their letters from the Ministry of Education, informing them if their cluster was successful in being allocated one of 623 Learning Support Coordinators to around 1000 schools.

Based on pure numbers alone, many schools should not have been surprised to hear they hadn't been allocated a LSC – the initial tranche was never going to supply every school with an LSC. However, the apparent criteria for allocation has left many reeling.

The letter explained that it was important that the LSCs were allocated to schools where the Ministry's Learning Support Delivery Model was already being implemented.

NZEI Te Riu Roa President Lynda Stuart says while any new resource for children with additional learning needs is welcome, the Ministry's allocation failed the test of whether it would get to the children who needed it most first.

"The Ministry's allocation decision is explicitly and primarily based on whether schools are *'in the three most advanced stages'* of the Ministry's Learning Support *'delivery model'*, not on how many students are on a school's special needs register or how inclusive a school is."

“Putting arbitrary system requirements ahead of what schools have said they want and need to meet the needs of children is disgraceful. The Government needs to urgently guarantee the next tranche of these roles and to ensure they are based in school communities facing the biggest challenges and who desperately need the resource.”

The New Zealand Principals’ Federation (NZPF) also expressed its surprise and disappointment.

“We understood that this first tranche of positions would be allocated fairly and evenly across the board,” says Whetu Cormick, NZPF President. “What is surprising is that there is a bias towards allocating LSCs to established Kahui Ako, or Communities of Learning.”

“We had hoped to see LSCs allocated to schools with the greatest number of students with severe learning and behavioural challenges. I question the Ministry’s announcement that schools have been selected on their advanced use of the new Learning Support Model as we do not believe that this is the case.”

National’s Education spokesperson Nikki Kaye says the way the LSCs have been allocated is “deeply unfair”.

“It appears the Government was not looking at which schools have the most need but instead has only allocated to schools who are currently implementing the Government’s learning support delivery model.

“I have been contacted by upset and angry principals who have huge need and weren’t offered the opportunity to be part of this and didn’t know this would be the criteria.

“This means a school that may already have huge resource might get one or two people and schools with little or no resource with high needs miss out.”

Minister Martin explains

But Associate Education Minister Tracey Martin says no one is missing out.

“What I was trying to ensure was that all of New Zealand had coverage – and that has been achieved – and that this new role has the best chance of success. That is why LSCs will be allocated into schools and clusters that are the most advanced in implementing the Learning Support Delivery Model in the first instance,” she says.

Martin says there was an emphasis on variety in the initial allocation.

“To make sure there was a variety of types of schools and settings in this initial allocation, the allocation decisions also took into account some specific characteristics of clusters, such as: the proportion of rural schools and the distance between schools; the proportion of Māori and Pacific students; the number of Māori medium kura in a community; and the number of students in a cluster.

“The allocation of the first tranche has not been made on decile, as the decile rating of a school is not necessarily a predictor of learning support need. Children needing extra learning support are in schools across all deciles.”

Martin says it is important to note that nothing is being taken away from what schools already have.

“The LSC roles are additional to services or positions schools currently have and my objective is that there will be further tranches to progressively roll out LSC coverage to all schools, though of course that will be subject to normal Budget decision-making processes.”

The Minister points out the Government’s investment into learning support.

“We’ve put more than \$600 million into Learning Support in the last two Budgets. All schools that have students who need extra help will benefit from this.”

No doubt schools currently grappling with how to spread their learning support resourcing across an ever-growing pool of learners with learning support needs will be watching the continued roll-out of the Action Plan with great interest.
