



Joint Initiative

ECE Workstream Report



23 March 2016



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Terms of Reference

This workstream has been guided by the agreed Terms of Reference (ToR). These are available here:

<http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Investing-in-Educational-Success/NZEIAndMOEAgreement9Dec14.pdf>

Scope

Our Key Principle: Children are the centre of a smooth and seamless whole of educational pathway from earliest learning to tertiary options (from the Joint Initiative Heads of Agreement)

<http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Investing-in-Educational-Success/Heads-of-Agreement-Ministry-of-Education-and-NZEI-21-July-2015.pdf>

To achieve this (principle) the early learning sector¹ will need to be equitable partners in Communities of Learning (CoL).

Executive Summary

CoL provide the opportunity for teachers to collaborate as professionals to improve learner outcomes through raising teacher capability. Including early learning services in CoL enables communities to focus on the child's whole educational pathway.

The work of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Workstream group (membership list Appendix 1) built on the findings of phase 1 of the Joint Initiative in Appendix 2. The group identified a range of challenges for early learning services to participate as equitable partners in a CoL:

- **Resourcing:** Investing in Educational Success (IES) funding is designated for schools only and funding cannot be accessed by early learning services. Early learning services and schools operate on different hours, therefore finding time for teachers to come together is difficult. Employers do not have discretionary funds to pay for a relief teacher to release teachers for inquiry time.
- **Information:** Lack of information and guidance to early learning services about CoLs, how to join, and the benefits of joining. Lack of information to schools about collaborating with early learning services.

¹ The Ministry of Education refers to early learning. NZEI Te Riu Roa refers to the profession as ECE (Early Childhood Education).

- **Structure of the early learning sector:** Competition between early learning services, volatility of the sector, size of services, number of services. The physical learning pathway for children is not always geographically neat
- **Differences in professional culture:** Knowledge gap in understanding about different curricula and assessment methodologies.

The focus was on exploring the roles and resourcing that may be needed to enable early childhood teachers and services to be equitable partners in CoL.

The group looked at the roles and resources, as outlined in the Heads of Agreement, available to schools in CoL. The group also considered case studies and findings from the early learning and schooling sectors and the NZEI Te Riu Roa survey responses from members about collaboration and transition.

For early learning services to be equitable partners, their teachers should have the opportunity to be appointed to any of the roles within a CoL, where they have the expertise to improve teacher capability and outcomes for learners.

We considered that in the short term there could be a role for an early learning teacher, or a facilitator with current practical ECE teaching expertise, to work with other teachers, including in schooling, to share and demonstrate good practice. This would be aligned with the Community's achievement challenges.

The group considers that this should be tested with early learning employers and teachers.

In the short term NZEI Te Riu Roa considers that a 0.4 FTE role for an ECE qualified and registered teacher should be resourced in a CoL. This role must link explicitly to the achievement challenge. The ECE teacher must have expertise and skills that link to the achievement challenge.

The teacher would work across a CoL to bring it together to focus on the achievement challenge, working with teachers and support staff.

NZEI Te Riu Roa considers that a critical feature of resourcing is shared professional learning and development (PLD) with the schooling sector – to share multiple curricula and bring professionals together so that there is a shared language of professional practice that shows the alignments for all children's learning.

Recommendations

All use of the term “teacher” refers to a qualified and registered teacher.

The ECE Workstream has the following recommendations:

Roles and Resources

Access to resourcing will be key to increasing participation from the early learning sector in CoL. Therefore, the group recommends:

1. The Ministry of Education investigates whether and how the existing resourcing available to CoL can be accessed by teachers within early learning services that are part of CoL.
2. Exploring with the sector and employers:
 - what would be necessary to enable early learning leaders who meet the agreed national criteria, to be appointed to the CoL leadership role?
 - how to resource release time for early learning teachers to participate in opportunities to improve and sustain teaching practice in a way that is aligned with a CoL’s achievement challenge.
3. Where early learning services are part of a CoL, the selection process for across CoL roles should reflect the broader community including early learning services.

NZEI Te Riu Roa recommends:

4. That a 0.4 FTE role for a qualified and registered ECE teacher is resourced as part of a CoL. This role would be determined by the achievement challenge and work across the CoL.
5. Each service/centre that joins a CoL can access the following:
 - Teacher release time to participate in the achievement challenge (this includes cover for relievers)
 - the current IES funding in CoL.
6. That IES funding be increased to better enable the early learning sector to participate in CoL.
7. Enable ECE Supervisors (registered teachers)/Head Teacher/Kōhanga Reo Head Teacher to apply for the leadership role in a CoL. Based on findings from phase 1 about lack of knowledge of curricula and assessment across the sectors, NZEI Te Riu Roa considers there needs to be more shared PLD across schooling and ECE.

Teacher-led Innovation Fund (TLIF)

8. The Ministry of Education should communicate to the early learning sector that the TLIF is available, and that early learning teachers working in partnership with teachers in the compulsory sector can make application to the Fund.
9. The Ministry of Education should update the TLIF online guidance to reflect the above.
10. The Ministry to investigate making changes to the TLIF to allow the early learning sector to be fund holders in round three (which commences 2017).

Guidance to support the early learning sector to join CoL

11. Update the guidance documents to inform the early learning sector about CoL and outline what the benefits are for children, their learning, and the early learning sector.
12. Update the range of communications for early learning teachers, employers and parent/iwi-led services (timing to be agreed):
 - how a CoL would look on the ground
 - what is happening in the schooling sector around early learning.

Consulting the early learning sector, including employers

13. Ministry of Education and NZEI Te Riu Roa to meet with the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) to understand views of the wider sector on CoL.

Background and Workstream Discussion

Process

1. The workstream recognised:
 - the role of NZEI Te Riu Roa and its work to represent its members.
 - the Ministry of Education's role in the early learning sector, what is driving the Government in early childhood education (improving quality and increasing participating for our most vulnerable children)
 - phase 1 of the Joint Initiative and including the case studies that were explored as part of this work
 - for collaboration to work well for whānau, aiga and parents, they need to be involved as the CoL forms.

2. The scope for the work ensured the workstream considered the learning from phase 1 of the Joint Initiative and that the group remained focused on children and improving their outcomes. This approach drove what we explored throughout consequent meetings.
3. The ECE Workstream identified that an important perspective was missing – that of the employers in the early learning sector.
4. The main themes of the ECE Workstream were:
 - the conditions that would be necessary for early learning services to participate in CoL
 - the barriers that need to be addressed to enable this
 - the interest from early learning services to participate in CoL
 - where there might be gaps in our understanding.
5. A small focus group made up of representatives from other parts of the early learning sector was convened to check the thinking of the workstream late in 2015. The focus group was comprised of two ECE teachers from local education and care centres, one ECE teacher from a Puna Reo and one primary school teacher.

Better transitions is a major benefit of early learning services being part of CoL

6. Successful transition to school is integral to success. The key to success in transitions is the nature of the relationships between all involved, particularly between children and their teachers. There are many characteristics of successful learning transitions, including:
 - making links between children’s learning in early learning and school (continuity of curricula)
 - learning about children and their families, and understanding the knowledge they bring with them
 - providing opportunities for learning that are appropriate to each child’s level of development
 - recognition and development of language, culture and identity – cultural intelligence.
7. A CoL should support effective learning transitions by creating an environment that develops and sustains the relationships and pedagogy necessary to address the characteristics above.

Conditions that could enable early learning sector participation in CoL

8. One of the workstream's discussions was around how you begin the conversation if an early childhood education centre wants to be part of a CoL. We discussed many factors that could support this. A key message for the sector is that participation in CoL is voluntary.
9. Finding common ground will be important to beginning and sustaining the relationships in CoL. This could reflect shared philosophies, programmes or interests between the early learning services and the schools considering participating in a CoL.
10. The group also considered that the early learning sector is likely to need support or facilitation to start the conversations between early learning services as well as with schools. We looked at all the early learning case studies in phase 1, which required brokering or facilitating roles to establish relationships between early learning services and primary schools.
11. A recurring theme was release time for teachers or kaiako to support their participation in CoL. This was emphasised by our discussions with the focus group, where it was also highlighted that resource would be an issue for employers.

Barriers to the early learning sector participating in CoL

12. The group identified a number of barriers to the early childhood education sector participating in CoL. The introduction of additional roles and resources for the early learning sector will not ensure success unless they are part of a broader policy that addresses the identified barriers.

Release time

13. The group discussed that there is no provision for CoL release time for the early learning sector within IES funding. Either the early learning sector must rely on schools that do have resource, or early learning employers bear the costs, or teachers do this work in their own time.
14. Due to different child contact hours, there is little opportunity for teachers to engage in professional conversations without release time. The nature of child contact hours in the early learning sector compared to schools diminishes early learning teacher capacity to work across the CoL.
15. Many early learning services have 8 hours of child contact per day, up to 6pm. Schools and early learning teaching environments are very different, and this point was frequently raised as a barrier to establishing across CoL collaboration.

Transitions from ECE to multiple schools

16. Building understanding, through focused learning opportunities, of curricula and ways of working in both early learning and primary education, were identified as critical to the successful and effective implementation of CoL.
17. NZEI Te Riu Roa representatives noted that, given the current funding mechanisms, schools may perceive early learning services as a drain on finite existing resources within the CoL.
18. Identifying which CoL is the 'best fit' was raised as a challenge, particularly when the learner pathway from early learning to primary education is not clear. It is common for multiple early learning services to transition children to multiple schools.
19. Early learning services can feed into a number of primary schools, some of which might not be geographically close. Many examples were provided where children attend an early learning service close to where a parent works, but attend a school that is close to home.

Competitive environment in the early learning sector

20. The early learning sector is a collection of both commercially driven and not for profit services, which often work in a competitive environment. It may be difficult for some parts of the early learning sector to work collaboratively.
21. It is vital to engage employers as a way of testing the ECE Workstream's recommendations. The Workstream discussed what roles for early learning teachers in CoL may look like and determined that it was necessary to test the feasibility of these with employers.
22. The Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) convenes the majority of early learning employer groups and membership bodies. Talking with ECAC is an efficient way for messages about the Joint Initiative to have maximum reach and ensure accurate information is shared about the opportunities for early learning services in CoL.

IES funding does not translate to an early learning context

23. Investing in Educational Success was developed to fund Communities of Schools (now called CoLs) and is structured in a way that supports the design of the compulsory education sector.
24. Funding entitlements for the teacher roles and inquiry time are currently based on school staffing entitlements that do not exist in the early learning sector, and for which there is no obvious substitute.

Roles and resources that could support the early learning sector in CoL

25. The ECE Workstream considered what roles and resources would encourage participation from the early learning sector in CoL.
26. We considered that there could be a role for an early learning teacher or a facilitator with early learning expertise to work with other teachers, including in schooling, to share and demonstrate good practice.
27. This would be aligned with the CoL's achievement challenge. This role may address some of the barriers identified earlier and also provide new career opportunities in the early learning sector.
28. NZEI Te Riu Roa considers an example of an ECE specific role is a 0.4 FTE role, once the CoL is established, working across ECE and schooling, so that the ECE teacher has release time to work in a sustainable way.
29. This role is an amalgam of the within and between-schools CoL roles, and is seen by NZEI Te Riu Roa as the best fit for ECE settings. Appendix 2 details the range of roles explored in both phase 1 and phase 2 of the Joint Initiative.
30. The availability of release time and the possible need to fund release time for early learning teachers to participate in the CoL is the most significant challenge to be addressed.

Appendix 1: ECE workstream membership

NZEI:	Ministry of Education:
Charmaine Thomson	Misty Parbhu (2015) / Siobhan Murray (2016)
Shelley Hughes	Tanya Duncan
Virginia Oakly	Hannah Stanfield
Julie Brice	Barry Boothby
Jan Taouma	Toni Nacu
Manu Pohatu*	Julie Houghton
Ngaretta Strong*	Su'a Kevin Thomsen

*1 meeting

Appendix 2: Summary of roles and resourcing discussed by the Joint Initiative ECE Workstream

Linking to our overarching principle: Children are the centre of a smooth and seamless whole of educational pathway from earliest learning to tertiary options. To achieve this principle early learning services will be equitable partners in a CoL.

The tables below are a summary of current and future roles and resourcing in ECE. The workstream explored the listed roles and resourcing to determine if there were existing models that could be applied to CoLs.

Existing roles	Wider community and sector supports provided by these roles
Strengthening Early Learning Opportunities (ELO) Leadership facilitators	Programme 3 Leadership PD delivered to ECE and schooling across regions: http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/running-an-ece-service/employing-ece-staff/selo/
Te Kohanga Reo Purapura cluster/talent pool	120 purapura across the country in the 1980s, made up of 5 kohanga, paid staff and extended whānau skilled in Te Reo Māori, financial management, IT. They could be project based and distribute PD/leadership. See Page 14 of the AGEL report: http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/Report-of-the-Advisory-Group-on-Early-Learning.pdf

Existing roles	Wider community and sector supports provided by these roles
Senior teachers (Kindergartens only)	Mentors, critical friends, professional development on curriculum, leadership etc.

Roles from Phase 1 summary of investigation	Description of roles and associated resourcing from Phase 1 summary of investigation
Community liaison teacher (Toru Fetu Kindergarten Phase 1 case study)	Mentoring of teaching team, develop leadership to crystallise the focus of the collaboration, develop a collective vision agreed with community stakeholders, within an MoU
Maraeroa School/ECE TEACHERS – team teaching	Release time to work with ECE, schools and other organisations, collective PLD, merging learning dispositions from Te Whāriki and key competencies in NZC
Raumati Beach Kindergarten	Time and money for production of individual transition document (based on research from Waikato University re parental involvement in transition at Taitoko Kindergarten)
Raumati Beach School- release time	A role to support transition across schools and centres – release time/time for teachers to be in other classes/centres

Roles from Phase 1 summary of investigation	Description of roles and associated resourcing from Phase 1 summary of investigation
	Transition programmes include elements of Te Whāriki
Nayland Kindergarten and School – release time	Alternating leadership role between kindergarten and school – release for teachers to observe children, spend time with special needs children.
Victory Square Kindergarten – Family Support worker	<p>Family Support worker – (broker between family and making funding applications for the school as well as practical support for family.</p> <p>Acts as advocate for child and family. Time to build relationships with whole family.</p>
Manchester St School – shared leadership	Transition programme with Kindergarten - time to track impact of transition – work long term.
Occupational Therapist (OT) and Navigator	<p>OT working with Ministry of Education, Special Education Canterbury and Navigator who puts actions into place for future success (of the teen).</p> <p>A community agency employs the Navigator – only applies to students verified for ORRS, whole of life challenge.</p>
St Patrick's Kaiapoi – 16 ECE, 6 Primary and 1 high school in cluster -	<p>Facilitator for the cluster and cluster lead role.</p> <p>60 hours PLD per term plus out of school time (Ministry of Education funded CORE Education contract).</p>

Roles from Phase 1 summary of investigation	Description of roles and associated resourcing from Phase 1 summary of investigation
facilitator	Te Whāriki and PD opportunities, high demand for PLD.
Karanga Mai – 22 teen parent units - each has a host school -	Effective collaborations with host school: http://teenparentschools.org.nz/our-school/karanga-mai-young-parents-college/
Linwood Avenue school and 16 ECS – facilitator	Time – took a year to establish relationship and project focus, met twice a term. Resource – facilitator for projects.
Waltham School and ECE centre on site	Time – classroom teacher and ECE – more release time to build and share collaboration and transition information.
Wainuiomata School partnerships – Pasifika teachers/educators/parents and community members	Liaison/coordinator/administrator to alleviate work load – community focused – important to engage to Pasifika leaders in the community focus on Pasifika education.
Rimutaka Kindergarten – external facilitator	Time to develop shared understanding, time for PLD, self-determined research – focus on connections between Te Whaariki and the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC).
Te Kura Kaupapa Māori	Facilitators for parent education classes (transition and collaboration for tamariki Māori).

Roles from Phase 1 summary of investigation	Description of roles and associated resourcing from Phase 1 summary of investigation
Manawatu – facilitators	
Balmoral School – permanent unit for a staff member for Te Whāriki	Time for ECE and primary teachers to meet, year 1 team includes staff with ECE qualifications/experience in ECE, using Te Whāriki contributes to transition.
Aoga Fa’a Samoa	PLD in bilingualism.
Mangere Bridge Kindergarten – praxis based research	Researchers – Sally Peters and Margaret Carr (Waikato University) – time for teacher release, time to process findings and reflect on connections between Te Whāriki/NZC and transition.
George St Normal school – transition leader	Time to build relationship and trust, funding to release teacher.
Weston School Learning Change Network (LCN) – Distributed leadership	LCN across ECE, school and secondary school. Distributed leadership – collaboration focus. Time to establish project and develop relationships, used internal capabilities.
Maheno school – shared PLD (rural setting)	Transition focus – shared PLD and release time for ECE teachers to collaborate with primary teachers.

Roles from Phase 1 summary of investigation	Description of roles and associated resourcing from Phase 1 summary of investigation
Hui – possible liaison role	Transition – time to understand whānau aspirations, time for PLD, Te Reo Māori expertise, transition is determined by the child.
Owhiro Bay kindergarten and school – leadership and facilitator	MoU between two parties. Distributed leadership and external facilitators.
<i>Between schools teacher role (Primary teachers agreement variation 2015)</i>	<p>Components of this role could apply to ECE. Sharing expertise across services and schools is desirable e.g. inclusive practice specialists, Senior Teachers (KTCA).</p> <p>Many ECE teachers work in shifts to ensure staffing regulations are met.</p> <p>Securing release time to take a teacher out of ratio means additional teachers need to be paid for.</p> <p>Structural barriers are that teacher release time and employer support.</p> <p>Could work if teacher release time was universal e.g. KTCA terms and conditions were universal.</p> <p>Query how existing expertise is recognised?</p> <p>Query how skilled staff are recognised in a CoL e.g. community liaison advisor for Toru Fetu Kindergartens cluster.</p>
<i>Within schools teacher role (Primary teachers</i>	ECE already does this; teaching in teams is standard practice.

Roles from Phase 1 summary of investigation	Description of roles and associated resourcing from Phase 1 summary of investigation
agreement variation 2015)	<p>Barrier – economies of scale for calculations of release time i.e. funding is allocated based on actual roll size against national average of rolls.</p> <p>This calculation doesn't apply in ECE due to large variances in teacher: child ratios based on regulations.</p> <p>Shift work is a significant barrier in ECS – teachers are rostered so sharing exemplary practice occurs after hours.</p>

Ideas for future roles/supports to facilitate participation of the early learning sector in CoL	
Roles / Resources	Functions of roles / resourcing
Transition facilitator	Organize meetings to enable transitions between ECE and schooling
Release reliever	Across ECE and schooling during the teaching day to enable observation in other sites - 2 days per week once CoL is formed.
Critical friend/academic	To test the theory of the project, check milestones, act as neutral provocateur, critique and enable pedagogy/community strength.

Ideas for future roles/supports to facilitate participation of the early learning sector in CoL	
Roles / Resources	Functions of roles / resourcing
Possible resources available across sector	Access to PLD to carry out innovation.
	Conjoint PLD on multiple curricular.
	Release time for inquiry/research e.g. 10 hours per year? to visit ECE, schools, kura with an intention to look at/test viable CoL colleagues.