



Shaping our Future

ECE Member Recommendations for the Early Childhood Education 10 Year Strategic Plan

Introduction

Mā whero mā pango ka oti ai te mahi
With red and black the work will be done.

Our recommendations have come from the results of a six-month conversation between members and friends of NZEI Te Riu Roa – because by joining our thinking we can get the work to create a stronger early childhood education system for children, done. The recommendations provide workable actions to Government so that children benefit from culturally intelligent public early childhood education serving our tamariki^[1], whānau and communities.

Supporting Te Tiriti o Waitangi means activating a genuine and authentic commitment to partnership; Māori succeeding as Māori, based on Māori frameworks to grow capacity for tikanga and Te Reo Maori through the lens of Te Ao Māori.

This plan is seeking to incentivise and deliberately plan future public ECE. It is not seeking to disadvantage existing diverse provision.

We are consciously ambitious for our tamariki and their future. Early learning is the foundation for life; building confidence, developing communication, strengthening hauora, wairua and sense of belonging to empower tamariki throughout their lives.

That's why we need action NOW.

We are shaping the future of early childhood education to guarantee that:

- every child can access quality public provision of community-based, locally responsive and culturally sustaining early childhood education services
- the Government's commitment to the mana, hauora and wellbeing of children is a reality
- there is a commitment to quality teaching and learning through a 100% qualified, fairly remunerated and fairly treated workforce

- the rights of children are centre stage, and the innate competencies and strengths of tamariki are recognised.

The starting point

As part of consultation on a 10 year strategic plan for ECE, the Government has set out five significant objectives (Education, 2018) for early learning and outlined some of the implications for these.

1. Learners at the centre
2. Barrier free access
3. Quality teaching
4. Quality inclusive public education
5. 21st century learning

In responding to these objectives members drew from the principles of Te Whāriki, Tataiako, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Sustainable Development Goals, Ka Hikitia, Te Whatu Pōkeka and a refreshed Pasifika education plan. Hauora principles are further strengthened by the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, endorsed by the Prime Minister.

Members are connecting the ECE strategic plan with aligned strategies and supporting legislation: the Tomorrow's Schools Review, the draft Disability and Learning Support Action plan, education Workforce planning, Tertiary education reforms and the Employment (Pay Equity and Equal Pay) Bill. All of these strategies and frameworks have interconnected impacts for the entire education sector, building from ECE. Members started from a position of child rights and clear commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori and Pasifika education frameworks.

The current direction of the Ministry's objectives focuses on the role of early childhood education in supporting women into/back into the labour market. This is one potential outcome of the provision of early childhood education – but ignores the critical need to put children at the centre in decision-making about the future. The future of early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand must be shaped from a child's needs, building quality public ECE provision that is responsive to children, whānau, hapū and community.

The members worked through positions and commitments to form seven connected ideas that enable children's rights to public quality early childhood education in Aotearoa:

- Championing public early childhood education
 - Planned provision, vertical integration and centralised hubs to enable and strengthen public ECE
- Developing leadership of the sector
 - Leadership and governance

- Fairness across the sector
 - Equalising terms and conditions of employment and workforce planning through centrally funding teacher salaries, incentivising 100% qualified and certificated teachers, progressing pay equity and fair pay agreements and requirements for commitments to sustained professional development
- Resourcing quality
 - Funding jolts for quality dimensions (e.g. 100% qualified and certificated teachers, ratios, sustained bicultural PLD (see recommendations quality teaching, quality inclusive education and twenty first century learning) and learning support (see recommendation resourcing including workforce planning
 - Resourcing quality dimensions including ratios, PLD, workforce planning and digital literacy
- Te Ao Māori frameworks
- Pasifika frameworks
- Growing innovation
 - Aotearoa based bicultural ECE research and innovation.

The end point

These recommendations are outlines of the substantial thoughts, ideas and suggestions that were contributed. The world is watching Aotearoa as ECE trailblazers of bicultural curricula, qualified teaching and formative assessment; these recommendations are offered to the Government, based on the premise of children's rights to planned quality public early childhood education.

Our recommendations

Our recommendations are set out below. First is the Government objective from the Strategic plan consultation document followed by our recommendations which describe the ways they work.

1. Learners at the Centre 2019 and ongoing

“In the context of early learning, this includes actively supporting the establishment of new public early childhood centres in areas of low-provision and supporting and lifting the quality of services that predominantly enrol Māori and Pacific children.”[2]

NZEI Te Riu Roa is recommending:

- The establishment of new public early childhood centres in areas of low provision in 2019.

Where low provision has been identified, a practice of establishing public centres must prevail. Access to early childhood education is a stated objective of this Government, and

ensuring this requires a planned network of provision that analyses not only where the need is, but takes account of where low provision may be limiting access to quality early childhood education.

- A much more ambitious programme of public provision for all tamariki.

“We need to be mindful of building capacity for our community based services. I like the suggestion about new centres proving a need before they are able to open. And a regional/national overview of the balance between community based, Kindergarten, at home care, Kōhanga , Pasifika and private centres. Without some government support community based centres aren’t in a position to expand; it might result in parents without an ECE option.”

Immediately enhancing public provision requires a national provision plan that works along with workforce planning so that communities know ECE belongs to them in the same way the school/kura sector is planned. Public ECE services could be built on or next to school/kura sites. It is acknowledged that marae-based Māori services will design their own plan consistent with iwi education plans. This all forms part of a national provision plan in the same way new schools and kura are designed, planned and regulated for optimal ratios, group sizes and staffing. A national public provision plan would strengthen ECE sector knowledge at local, rohe and national levels and communities would be assured of public ECE near their homes or places of work. The aim of planning provision is to strengthen local communities.

- Any new public service must prove local need and commit to providing regulated quality dimensions.

This includes 100% qualified and certificated teachers and ratios, fair terms and conditions of employment, sustained bicultural curricula PLD, dedicated teaching leadership and governance serving education in communities.

- Public ECE services may join organizational hubs (described more fully under Government objective 2 below).

The hub provides back office support services to its sister services e.g. governance and professional leadership support, shared bicultural PLD and learning support. This will support community based services/standalone services that have struggled due to historical funding cuts, building strength around a shared vision to provide planned public quality early childhood education.

- Increased cultural responsiveness in all services; intentionally adapting so that Māori and Pasifika world views are at the centre.

This means building out from Te Ao Māori and Pasifika frameworks with aligned leadership, sustained bicultural curricula PLD and resourcing Māori and Pasifika PLD facilitators and recruiting diverse governance personnel. Teachers are confident and capable in delivering curricula that supports Māori and Pasifika tamariki and whānau.

- Planning bicultural initial teacher education programmes to build a culturally strong ECE workforce and recognition of indigenous Level 7 qualifications (Whakapakiri) (NZQA, 2003) is required.

2. Quality Inclusive Public Education 2019 - 2020

“This involves turning the tide away from a privatised, profit-focused education system. In the context of early learning, this includes working to ensure that community-based early childhood education services have well-maintained facilities and are able to expand to meet growing demand.”[3]

NZEI Te Riu Roa is recommending:

- An ambitious strategy of re-balancing the sector toward public provision.

This can be achieved by using existing kindergarten and willing community providers as a hub to build a new system with governance, professional and administrative supports.

- Incentivizing an opt-in process for private centres who may decide to integrate into a central public hub and share infrastructure, leadership and diverse PLD.
- Any new services are planned as public community based services and integrated with schools/kura as part of a national ECE provision plan.

This can be implemented by adapting the existing [integrated schools legislation](#) for ECE.

- Prioritisation of public funding for public services meeting quality criteria.

Quality criteria includes plans for moving to ratios of 1:3 for children under 3, incentivizing 100% qualified and certificated teachers in public community services, having employer commitments to progressing pay equity in terms and conditions of employment and progressing fair pay agreements. Regulations and policy will need to be timed together to support this quality shift so that there are no adverse impacts on communities, teachers/kaiako[4] and support staff.

- Public provision of ECE being automatically prioritised when new services are required.

This forms the basis of a national ECE provision plan that works with school/kura provision planning and iwi education plans.

“It is time that the whole ECE sector is on the one waka. Kohanga reo has been at the bottom of the funding band for many years alongside Playcentre. Bring back 100% qualified teachers and pay teachers what they are worth. ECE teachers commit so much time and energy to their profession, it’s time to look at their hauora (wellbeing) and their mana, and ensure they are recognised as professionals as well. Time is spent dedicated to the ECE profession, and the passion that teachers have overtakes the time spent with whānau.”

-ECE leader, facilitator and governance representative.

3. Quality Teaching 2019

“Over time, the Government’s aim is to achieve 100% qualified and certificated teachers in all centre-based teacher-led early learning services and to improve group size and teacher: child ratios for infants and toddlers”[5]

NZEI Te Riu Roa is recommending:

- Urgent funding to improve improving ratios and address the 100% qualified and immersion teacher/kaiako shortage. Funding ratios of 1:3 for children under 3 as a priority.
- Immediate reinstatement of 100% quality teacher funding, re-setting the goal of 100% qualified and certificated teachers with a phased action plan.

This must be actioned in 2019 to address teacher shortages and address teacher: child ratios. Initial teacher education programmes will also need further resourcing to support increased demand for qualified teachers/kaiako.

- Developing and actioning an ECE workforce plan alongside unified terms and conditions of employment across the sector.
- Building workforce capacity for good governance and leadership by offering public community organisational hubs which services can opt into.
- Develop and use Fair Pay Agreements and expand current collective agreements in the sector to deliver excellent, rather than minimum, standards, pay and conditions for all staff in ECE services. This includes sustained bicultural PLD as essential in collective agreements.
- 2020 – 2028 increased phased funding to attract, resource, retain and centrally pay for 100% qualified public ECE workforce for the long-term. (Funding needs to be escalated at rates higher than CPI and household so that employers, teachers and families do not bear unsustainable costs).
- Central funding of salaries for teachers in public early childhood education; and Addressing wage injustice by funding for pay parity and speedy progress on a sector-wide pay equity claim is needed to equalise pay and conditions across the whole teaching workforce.

This would mean that every teacher in public ECE is assured of consistent pay and this is administered from one place. This would take a burden off many umbrella organisations and stand-alone employers. It also means that there would be comprehensive public education workforce data across all teaching professions.

- 2018 – 2028 resource and prioritise new research for strategic policy areas e.g., the cumulative and equalising effects of pay equity, fair pay agreements and 100% qualified and certificated teachers across planned public ECE.

“Government to take on regulated required teacher salaries using a similar model to the model integrated schools use. This would mean teachers required for ratios would be paid via Novopay on a salary scale. Additional staff and all other costs would be covered by in operational budget. This would address pay equity and profiteering. Wouldn’t cost impossible amounts as systems already

exist and this is reallocating current money. This would need to go hand in hand with addressing ratios particularly for infants and toddlers.”

4. Barrier Free Access 2019

“In the context of early learning, this includes putting the “free” back into the policy of 20 Hours Free early learning for all three and four year olds, and those five-year olds who aren’t yet in school.”[6]

NZEI Te Riu Roa is recommending:

- A vision and plan for a public ECE system that is free for all children.

This builds an expectation of public education from ECE to tertiary levels so that communities benefit and are not paying for public ECE.

- Immediately increasing the current 20 hours free subsidy for 3 and 4 year olds.

Enabling greater subsidies means that families are not disadvantaged by operating costs and are assured of ECE for specific developmental stages.

- Extending the 20 hours free subsidy to 2 year olds. There are greater numbers of 2 year olds attending ECE.

There are greater costs that go along with this increase in participation; adjusting adult: child ratios costs should not be passed on to parents and employers in public ECE.

“Do childcare subsidies for parents enter into part of this debate? How do they provide an equitable opportunity for parents to access high quality ECE, and what happens when your closest option isn’t your preferred one?”

5. 21st Century Learning 2018 - 2020

“The Government is committed to focusing on learning that is relevant to the lives that New Zealanders are living today, the technology they will interact with, and the types of skills that will provide them with the opportunities to thrive in all aspects of their lives.”[7]

NZEI Te Riu Roa is recommending:

- An increased focus on professional learning and development (PLD) for ECE teachers so they are formally equipped to use the tools, technology and automation of the day and not be disrupted by technology inequity.

This means that teachers are equipped to understand, respond and use technology in their teaching practice, leadership and community connections.

- Funding for bicultural PLD for all teachers on Te Whāriki implementation and assessment.

- Certificated and practising teachers/kaiako are required to demonstrate a depth of knowledge of Te Ao Māori so they are able to genuinely collaborate with whānau in English medium and Miro Māori services. Currency in dual curricula PLD enables good practice in all settings. Bicultural PLD also requires workforce planning so there are PLD facilitators and pouako/lecturers in the 22nd century.
- Funding for digital technology provision, PLD and equitable access (for learning support and online distance learners).

Online and distance learning in ECE delivery and for ITE are not new concepts. Poverty in digital literacy is a factor – having access to technology assumes there is the income to support provision. This also requires planning so that children, teachers and families are not disrupted by lack of technology and are equipped to explore the opportunities that technology presents.

- Research is undertaken to ensure ethical practices from both Te Ao Māori and other lenses is available to inform an ECE digital strategy.
- Research will form part of the Te Ao Māori framework designed by Māori for Māori.
- Development of a dedicated digital strategy with ECE sector and community input.

Technology advances in every decade and is a matter of educational equity i.e. no one gets left behind due to income level and or inequitable access to the technology of the day. Therefore designing an ECE digital strategy requires a plan for community, whānau, government and sector to form together.

“... key components of digital literacy are the habits of critique, mindfulness and conscious consumerism, for tamariki and kaiako alike...we will need ongoing PD. The policy also needs to look at digital literacy from a cultural perspective too.”

Making it a Reality – First Steps in a Timeframe for Quality Public Early Childhood Education

The recommendations outlined previously are a mix of short, medium and longer term. In this section we are highlighting those that the Government needs to act on immediately to make a difference.

We need legislated action and improved funding now, the next two years are crucial. The wellbeing experiences of our tamariki and their learning in the early years is the foundation for their long term success as citizens.

Funding for quality 2019:

The recommendations below align with the Terms of Reference objectives: Learners at the centre, barrier free access, quality teaching and quality inclusive public education.

- Reinstatement of funding for centres with 100% qualified and certificated teachers.
- An urgent funding jolt for provision of early intervention, to return to at least 2007 levels of service intensity.
- Commitment to phased incentives for the key quality public early childhood dimensions within the next 1-3 years, including improved ratios
- Development of funding systems to incentivise quality public early childhood education (100% qualified and certificated teachers, ratio improvements, collective agreements with sustained PLD provision, collective agreements that deliver excellent rather than minimum conditions including pay rates).
- Progress ECE pay equity claims.
- Develop process and action plan to implement central funding for teachers.

Planning for quality 2019:

The recommendations below align with the Terms of Reference objectives: Learners at the centre, barrier free access, quality teaching, 21st century learning and quality inclusive public education.

- Develop policy that supports prioritisation of new centres in areas of low provision being public early childhood centres
- Develop policy that supports new centres being vertically integrated with schools i.e. being planned to align with schooling plans and being built as close as possible to schools/kura where practicable.
- Analysis of localised provision with forecasting for the next 10 years.
- Development of hubs, based on kindergarten and willing community providers, to support a public early childhood education system.
- Urgently strengthen workforce planning to:

- Progress the achievement of meeting the target for 100% qualified and certificated teachers in all teacher-led services.
- Ensure pathways from ITE to teaching and leadership for Māori teachers and leaders, and Pasifika teachers and leaders.
- Ensure resourcing and planning for leadership and governance workforce.

Legislating for quality

The recommendations below align with the following Terms of Reference objectives: Learners at the centre, quality inclusive public education and 21st century learning.

- Amend legislation and licensing regulations to prioritise and resource public early childhood education.
- Amend any new maximum licenses to 50 in line with the [Homebased Review license maximums](#). Ensure that any newly designed services are intentionally designed to support optimal attachment, cap group sizes and respond to increasing learning support needs. This means that children do not have to compete for teaching/support staff resources, and are comfortable in an environment without excessive noise with dedicated quiet spaces for rest and dignified personal care.
- Strengthen licensing and regulatory frameworks to capture dimensions of quality education delivery and bicultural formative assessment.

2020

- Design of planned public provision tested, with community, sector and wider stakeholders input. Use existing ELI, MSD, and Statistics NZ data to road test viability of planned public provision.
- Introduce legislation to support the integration of centres into a public system.
- Implement new categories for funding systems that incentivise quality public early childhood education. This means increasing the per child funding in existing and new community based public ECE services and extending 20 hours subsidy to two year olds. Government would expect fees to be reduced as public ECE grows in communities. New categories for funding systems would be progressed by adapting existing legislation, in new regulations and licensing requirements.
- Progress on fair pay agreements (i.e. bargaining rules and dispute resolution processes) and ratification and enforcement of fair pay agreements.
- Implementing existing and new accountability frameworks including ELI, progress on pay equity claims, and NZQA recognition of indigenous qualifications.
- Introduce legislation to include [Te Whāriki](#) as a requirement under the Education Act 1989.

Conclusion

Te tōia, te haumatia

Nothing can be achieved without a plan, workforce and way of doing things.

This report delivers comprehensive actions to unite, resource and sustain quality public ECE. It has been designed with multiple world views and deliberately centres around ECE serving communities, children and whānau now and beyond the 21st century.

Education, M. o. (2018). *Terms of Reference ECE strategic plan* Wellington Retrieved from <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/Strategic-Plan-ToR.pdf>.

NZQA. (2003). *Whakapakari Tino Rangatiratanga Qualification Overview*. NZQA Retrieved from <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nzqf/search/viewQualification.do?selectedItemKey=PC1699>.

[1] Tamariki means children (plural).

[2] Terms of Reference, ECE 10 Year Strategic Plan – <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/Strategic-Plan-ToR.pdf>

[3] Terms of Reference, ECE 10 Year Strategic Plan – <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/Strategic-Plan-ToR.pdf>

[4] Kaiako (noun) teacher, instructor.

[5] Terms of Reference, ECE 10 Year Strategic Plan – <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/Strategic-Plan-ToR.pdf>

[6] Terms of Reference, ECE 10 Year Strategic Plan – <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/Strategic-Plan-ToR.pdf>

[7] Terms of Reference, ECE 10 Year Strategic Plan – <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/Strategic-Plan-ToR.pdf>