Early Childhood Education and Care in New Zealand: What have we done right and what are we doing wrong for young children and families?

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This presentation

- ECEC in New Zealand
- Te Whāriki and narrative assessment
- Public policies from a child rights to an interventionist approach
- Interwoven: Advocacy as a lever of influence
Aotearoa New Zealand
ECEC in New Zealand: “A paradigm of diversity”

- Kindergartens
- Education and care centres (childcare)
- Homebased ECEC (family daycare)
- Kōhanga reo (Māori immersion language nests)
- Pasifika bilingual and immersion ECEC
- Playcentre (parents collectively educate and manage playcentres)
- Playgroups

Most emerged to meet a need and through “do it yourself activism”... But this strong community basis has shifted somewhat in the last two decades, parallel to increased government funding, as a growing percentage of business owners have set up education and care and home based ECEC centres.
## Growth in privately owned ECEC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Education and care n (%)</th>
<th>Homebased n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>(41%)</td>
<td>(59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>800 (54)</td>
<td>672 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1011 (57)</td>
<td>759 (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1567 (64)</td>
<td>867 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1535 (65)</td>
<td>834 (35)</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Education Counts
Developing an integrated approach to policy and curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Integration of care and education under educational administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3 year integrated early childhood teacher training in colleges of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Two early childhood unions amalgamated</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Te Whāriki, early childhood curriculum for children birth to school age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>A ten year strategic plan for ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2012</td>
<td>Staged plan to reach target of 100 percent qualified registered ECE teachers in ECEC</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Kindergarten teachers pay parity with primary and secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>20 hours ‘free’ ECE for 3 and 4 year-olds</td>
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Founding aspirations
To grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society. (Ministry of Education, 1996)
Te Whāriki principles
Empowerment – Whakamana.
Holistic development – Kotahitanga.
Family and community – Whānau tangata.
Relationships – Ngā hononga.

Five strands of empowerment (outcome) are woven within the principles
Belonging – Mana Whenua
Well-being – Mana Atua
Exploration – Mana Aotūroa
Communication – Mana Reo
Contribution – Mana Tangata
The assessment context

• The purpose of assessment is to give useful information about children’s learning and development to the adults providing the programme and to children and their families. *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996)

• Effective assessment for sustained achievements over time is reliant on quality interactions and relationships

  • *Position Paper on Assessment* in school sector (MoE, 2011)
The community context

Teachers
Assessment capability is crucial to improvement. Teacher assessment capability for recognising indicators of quality participation and making them visible can be strengthened.

Parents / families / community
When education settings, families and community groups work as partners to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more. (e.g. Epstein et al, 2003, EPPSE project)

The powerful role of parent expectations for sustaining the learning journey. e.g. Hattie (2009)

Families/whānau are key partners for high quality outcomes for diverse children in the early years e.g. Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph (Best Evidence Synthesis) (2003)

Children
Self-assessment capacities and collaborative discussions amongst peers about understandings are emphasised for sustained achievement e.g. Black and Wiliam (1998), Wiliam (2011)
Qin Qin, today your best buddy Brendan did not come to kindy. You looked a little lonely in the beginning of the day but soon you started to find new friends. You played with Katelyn first who was new to kindy. You spoke in Cantonese to her and really looked after her. Later you and Ayzal set up an ice-cream shop. You eagerly offered it to Cullen in English: “Want ice cream? Want ice cream?” You left the sandpit for a while and found a rock in the garden. You saw Chen Chen and asked him in Mandarin Chinese “Do you want it?” Chen Chen said no and then you turned to Kumaran and offered it again in English to him.

Wendy’s reflection:
The central function of language is communication. Qin Qin is a confident communicator and has shown amazing linguistic skills when he approaches children with different languages. Qin Qin has demonstrated his social competence when he interacts with children around him with ease and confidence. Qin Qin is good at using drawing to represent his ideas and is also starting to show interest in letters and writing.
I am so proud of the progress he’s made!
Later Wendy wrote the same story for Qin Qin in Chinese characters with his English words written in English, thereby helping Qin Qin explore a link between written language and spoken word in two languages.

勤勤，今天你最好的朋友Brendan不上幼儿园，早上的时候你显得有点孤单，但是很快你就开始和其它小朋友一起玩啦！你先是和Katelyn一起在沙池里玩，你们俩愉快地用广东话交谈。很快你又和Ayzal一起在沙池里建了个雪糕店，我看见你热心地用英文向Cullen推销雪糕，“Want ice cream? Want ice cream?”（卖雪糕吗？）你离开了沙池一会儿，在花园里找到一块小石头，见到晨晨就大声用国语问他 “你要不要？”晨晨表示不要后，你继续用国语说，“你不要，他们要！”然后转向Kumaran用英文交流。语言的中心功能就是交流。勤勤在和其他小朋友交流时，信心满满。他可以使用不同的语言轻松自如地和不同的小朋友沟通。勤勤已经能用图画来表达自己的意思，最近他也开始对字母开始感兴趣，早上也开始学着要来签到了！勤勤的进步真大啊，我真为你骄傲！

家长的话：


What do you think when someone speaks in their own language to you?

Maybe I don’t understand, he’s thinking about a sandwich and it’s salmon, but I’m thinking about ham”

Daniel
Future Directions. Early childhood education in New Zealand

• Structures and funding for high quality ECE
• Led by NZEI Te Riu Roa (union)
• Included representatives of the 7 major community-based ECE organisations
• Based on widespread consultation within the sector
Political leaders’ comments

What makes the report highly credible is that the project team itself was broadly based, and there was very extensive consultation throughout the sector. Helen Clark, Leader Opposition

About the most significant document to emerge in the lead up to election 96. What you have shown very clearly is that you understand the meaning of participatory democracy and can use it to your advantage. Margaret Austin, United Future education spokesperson
Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki

• Increasing participation in quality ECE
• Improving quality of ECE
• Promoting collaborative relationships

Supporting strategies

Funding review, regulations review, research and evaluation, sector involvement in policy development
Strategic plan initiatives to raise quality

20 exemplars of narrative documentation sent out to all schools and early childhood centres

Professional resources
- Assessment resources
- ICT strategies
- Self review resources

Professional capabilities
- Professional development
- Teacher registration targets and incentives
- Centres of Innovation
Assessment practice ratings 2004, 2006 to 2009
The shifts in teachers’ assessment practices were mirrored by shifts in parents’ involvement in assessment and planning.

**Parent participation in assessment and planning**

- 2004 – 36%
- 2006 – 47%
- 2009 – 60%
Registered teachers (national figures)

• 2004 - 37.3 percent

• 2006 - 56.4 percent

• 2009 – 64 percent
Coherence of policy initiatives

The key points of difference between services that were low quality and services of consistently high quality, were the proportion of qualified and registered teachers, the range and depth of professional development engaged in and management support for teachers/educators to develop professionally.
2009 political change: from universalism to social interventionism

- Reduced qualification targets and removed professional supports – neglect of quality
- Targeting priority families for participation
- Obligations for beneficiaries to enrol child in ECE
- Some promising initiatives to encourage participation
- But unfettered expansion of for-profit provision
Barriers to participation

- Cost, high waiting lists and lack of transport
- Provision does not meet needs - hours, location, not responsive to language and cultural aspirations
- ECE centres experienced as unwelcoming
- Personal reasons – confidence, do not trust, past negative educational experiences, remain “under the radar”
What supported participation?

- Community planning
- Integration with family services
- Enrolment policies: free ECE, flexible enrolments
- Transport where children are not local
- Responsiveness to families and weaving cultural understandings and local knowledge into the curriculum
The state of ECEC in mixed market economies

• The state, private for-profit and community-based services play a role in provision

• Corporate providers – commercial interest in profits for owners or shareholders

• Parents will “vote with their feet” for quality, affordable ECEC
The “giant in the playground”

Eddie Groves, director of ABC Learning

Rise and fall of ABC learning

• Largest corporate provider in world
• Standardised policies, narrowing of curriculum, “plastic fantastic” toys
• Squeezed out local providers
• Collapsed in November 2008
• Australian government spent $56m to keep centres open
Quality public early childhood education project

The vision

- Every child has a right as a citizen to participate in free early childhood education

- Every family that wishes to can access high quality, community-based early childhood education
References


