

Evaluation Report

On the Operation of
PORSE Programme,
Delivery and Support



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1. Executive Summary

This evaluation is to determine whether the operation of PORSE¹ programme delivery and support meets the needs of its three key stakeholder groups² and Government expectations based on information from PORSE strategic documents and from interviews with a sample of parents, educators and programme co-ordinators on different PORSE sites. The evaluation also considers the extent to which the strategic intent and actual programme delivery align.

PORSE currently provides home-based care and education for over 7,000 children, working with over 5,000 families, 3,000 educators and 2,000 students across New Zealand. It has a strong focus on education and training, and is committed to supporting individuals, families and communities through using the latest scientific research in early brain development and attachment theory to address education needs.

PORSE In-Home Childcare & Educator Training (NZ) Ltd ('PORSE') is New Zealand's largest and longest serving home-based early childhood education (ECE) and training provider, representing 38.3% of the total home-based ECE market in 2012³. PORSE offers a career pathway that is focused on meeting the individual needs of each learner and recognises that there is no 'one size fits all' approach.⁴

The evaluation design is based on triangulated evaluation methodology and considers the extent to which PORSE meets the needs of:

- parents;
- educators;
- programme co-ordinators⁵;
- children; and
- government

The results of the strategic document analysis show how PORSE intends to interpret and implement the high level intent in its Statement of Intent (SOI) to nurture babies and young children by offering in-home care in a safe, supportive environment where children can develop a secure attachment relationship with their carer.⁶ The context for this implementation is the stated intention of PORSE to work in partnership with Government to provide high quality ECE for children within an environment of changing patterns of workforce participation and fiscal constraint.

¹ PORSE is a home-based Early Childhood Education provider.

² The three key stakeholder groups are parents, educators, and programme co-ordinators.

³ <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/directories/early-childhood-services>.

⁴ Maloney, E., Statement of Intent 2013-2017 PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd (PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd, 2012), p.3.

⁵ Also known as Programme Tutors.

⁶ Maloney, E., Statement of Intent 2013-2017 PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd (PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd, 2012).

PORSE intends to make a well-structured contribution to meeting the needs of children by having educators who are trained to understand child development and Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum, and who can put these understandings into a home-based ECE context. This knowledge can then be applied directly for the benefit of children and their parents and families.

The results from the on-site interview showed that all stakeholders chose PORSE over other ECE options, and remained with PORSE because of its strengths. These were seen as primarily the PORSE philosophy, characterised by secure attachment relationships with children; a low ratio of adults to children; and a responsive, flexible support network.

The expectation of support, including professional development and training programmes, was a significant factor in the choice of PORSE by educators and programme co-ordinators, and all three groups of stakeholders saw how children ultimately benefitted from this.

Parents were attracted to PORSE by the wide range of services on offer, with Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) opportunities for children being seen as important. Educators stated that the opportunity to work from home, and the support PORSE gave them with tax and handling payments from parents, were factors that influenced their choice of PORSE.

A compelling reason given by slightly more than half the parent sample for choosing PORSE as an ECE provider was their perception of centre-based services as an undesirable ECE option. All stakeholders said that cost was not an issue for them compared with the values and quality of the PORSE service.

Almost all stakeholders were very happy with the responsiveness of PORSE to their needs and with the kind and level of support they received from PORSE.

All parents in the sample were involved to some extent in goal setting for their children with their educators and received feedback on their children's activities and achievements, as well as any issues or incidents. This feedback occurred through daily informal discussion with educators and through more formal feedback through journals, which provided a valuable record of their children's progress. The journal was considered to be an important tool in involving a parent with their child's learning.

All four programme co-ordinators saw their role as supporting educators to plan, record, and report back to parents in a meaningful way, and to send visit notes to parents that included comments and questions about children's progress.

PORSE was seen by all stakeholders as being highly responsive to children's physical, emotional and learning needs, and all stakeholders said that they would recommend PORSE to others, and cited the strengths of PORSE as the reason for doing so.

A number of suggested improvements were made by all three groups of stakeholders. These included:

- the need for a career pathway with on the job training for a fit-for-purpose home-based ECE qualification;
- the value of having training in adult education for programme co-ordinators to enhance their role; and
- the value of forums for educators and programme co-ordinators to share ideas and have input into the strategic direction of PORSE.

The need for improvement in administrative support was noted by two parents and three educators and referred to poor communication or inaccurate recording of information that resulted in confusion, distress, and time being wasted.

Individual stakeholders made useful suggestions about improvements to curriculum support documentation.



2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine whether the operation of PORSE⁷ programme delivery and support meets the needs of its three key stakeholder groups⁸ and Government expectations. The evaluation results will strengthen PORSE self review by providing:

- evidenced information that helps PORSE understand how well its programme delivery and support match its strategic intent; and
- a sound basis for PORSE future strategic and programme planning.

2.2 Background

PORSE currently provides home-based care and education for over 7,000 children, working with over 5,000 families, 3,000 educators and 2,000 students across New Zealand.

With a strong focus on education and training, PORSE is committed to supporting individuals, families and communities through using the latest scientific research in early brain development and attachment theory to address education needs.

PORSE believes that living and learning begins at home and that the best foundation for early learning is the provision of a stable and secure environment where children are able to build secure attachment relationships with their individual carers. PORSE aims to offer responsive ECE that provides for each child and family:

- a consistent secure attachment relationship through a primary carer.
- flexibility;
- low ratios of children to each adult; and
- a safe, settled, calm and nurturing learning environment that meets individual needs.



⁷ PORSE is a home-based Early Childhood Education provider.

⁸ The three key stakeholder groups are parents, educators, and programme co-ordinators.

PORSE In-Home Childcare & Educator Training (NZ) Ltd ('PORSE') is New Zealand's largest and longest serving home-based early childhood education (ECE) and training provider, representing 38.3% of the total home-based ECE market in 2012⁹. PORSE offers a career pathway that is focused on meeting the individual needs of each learner and recognises that there is no 'one size fits all' approach.¹⁰

Established in 1993, PORSE has developed from an initial programme to guide early childhood students undertaking practicum in family homes to a company with Community Teams all around New Zealand providing home-based ECE services and work-place training. A National Support Office (NSO) adds further support to the services provided by home educators.

PORSE is licensed and monitored by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and reviewed by the Education Review Office (ERO). Internal PORSE monitoring of educators and their practice occurs every three months. The licensing criteria cover structural indicators of quality such as premises and facilities, health and safety, governance, management and administration.

In common with other home-based ECE services, PORSE is committed to, and licensed for, small group sizes and low ratios of children to adults. The point of difference for PORSE is its commitment to ensuring that other indicators of quality ECE are inherent in its programmes and training. The ECE Taskforce report comments that:

The philosophy of a service may also provide an assurance as to the level of quality that is being provided; for example, those services placing a high emphasis on educational resourcing, outdoor space, or adult-to-child ratios, as part of their 'above minimum' service to parents.¹¹

⁹ <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/directories/early-childhood-services>.

¹⁰ Maloney, E., Statement of Intent 2013-2017 PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd (PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd, 2012), p.3.

¹¹ Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R. (2011, An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.135.

3. About the Evaluation

3.1 Scope

3.1.1 Strategic Document Analysis

A strategic document analysis was undertaken to provide in-depth information on the background and process for the strategic intent and operation of PORSE programmes and support given to key stakeholders.

3.1.2 On-site interviews

Interviews were conducted with three key stakeholder groups (parents, educators and programme co-ordinators¹²) on four different sites:

- Palmerston North
- Auckland
- Christchurch
- Wellington

The total sample for the face-to-face interviews on-site can be seen in the following table:

Parent sample	Educators	Programme Co-ordinators
16	16	4

The interviews consisted of a series of investigative and prompt questions that were designed to answer five evaluation questions (coded EQ)¹³:

EQ1 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of parents?

EQ2 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of educators?

EQ3 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of Programme Co-ordinators?

EQ4 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of children?

EQ5 To what extent does PORSE meet the expectations of Government?

The first three evaluation questions, **EQ1**, **EQ2** and **EQ3**, were answered through interviews with key stakeholders. The fourth and fifth evaluation questions, **EQ4** and **EQ5**, were answered by triangulating evidence from the analysis of PORSE strategic documents with evidence from on-site findings.

¹² Also known as Programme Tutors.

¹³ See Appendix 1 for details.

3.2 Method for the evaluation

The Evaluation Design is based on triangulated evaluation methodology. This methodology ensures validity and reliability by bringing together different sources of evidence to enable conclusions to be drawn about the effectiveness of the operation of PORSE programme delivery and support as perceived by key stakeholder groups. The evaluation also considers the way in which the strategic intent of PORSE meets Government expectations, and the extent to which the strategic intent and actual programme delivery align.

The following stages make up this process of evaluation:

- initial scoping;
- document analysis;
- on-site fieldwork;
- final synthesis; and
- reporting.

These stages are reflected in different aspects of the Evaluation Design:

- **Evaluation Scope:** Initial scoping occurs through the gathering of relevant background information from documentation and discussion with PORSE staff.
- **Evaluation Questions:** These questions are formulated from the evaluation scope to focus the findings on determining the extent to which the strategic intent matches the actual operation of PORSE programme delivery and support, and Government expectations.
- **Investigative Questions:** These are more detailed questions that help to explore the big evaluation questions. They cover a range of information indicated by each evaluation question. Answers to these are sought during the on-site investigation.
- **Evaluation Tools:** These are the means by which the investigative and in turn the evaluation questions are answered. They can consist of proformas to process information collected from documents, or proformas to be used in interviews, surveys and observations.
- **Analysis of Data:** The information gathered during the on-site fieldwork, and from the document analysis, is used to answer the investigative and evaluation questions, and to verify key findings in a final synthesis.
- **Reported Key Findings and Conclusions:** Key findings are prioritised and conclusions drawn from the final synthesis.
- **Gap Analysis and Recommendations:** A gap analysis looks at those aspects of the operational and support processes that would benefit from further development to meet the strategic intent of PORSE. Recommendations for process improvement and development are made on the basis of the gap analysis.

3.3 Confidentiality of information

Evaluation practice was in keeping with the ethical principles and associated procedures endorsed in the Australasian Evaluation Society's Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations.

Stakeholders who participated in the evaluation are guaranteed that they will not be identified individually with respect to the information they provide.

The data analysis and this report group information and findings according to the role of personnel interviewed.

4. Results

4.1 The extent to which PORSE meets the needs of parents

4.1.1 Why did parents choose PORSE?

Parents in the evaluation sample were asked to explain why they chose PORSE rather than another ECE provider for their children. Almost three quarters of parents had PORSE recommended to them through friends, community or family; this included recommendations from ante-natal groups and playgroups. The remaining parents had seen advertisements on PORSE branded cars, on television and in magazines, and had investigated the service further either by using the website or by ringing a local branch of PORSE.

PORSE was chosen by parents over other ECE options for a variety of reasons that included:

- a preference for the PORSE philosophy;
- a national service that was more responsive and friendly with a larger base of educators than other home-based agencies;
- the range of services on offer; and
- the support provided for educators.

Parents expressed their preference for the PORSE philosophy by mentioning a number of different aspects that were important to them individually. Six of the sample parents chose PORSE over other ECE options because they each wanted their child in a settled environment in their own home with a secure relationship with an educator. These educators were mainly nannies, though one was the children's grandmother who had trained as an educator with PORSE. A parent who had had experience of a nanny for her daughter through PORSE now had a PORSE educator for her son.

Five of the sample parents chose PORSE over other ECE options because they wanted a one-on-one secure attachment relationship for their children, and saw this as the next best thing to their children being at home with them. For one of these parents, having an educator who spoke the same language (Russian) was of vital importance to replicate a home environment rich in Russian culture. Three parents made specific mention of the importance of the favourable PORSE adult: child ratio of a maximum of four children to each educator, and wanted a sole person caring for their children and building a secure relationship. Almost half the parent sample chose PORSE rather than another home-based organisation because PORSE was seen as being responsive and friendly, with a large base of educators that enabled choice and increased the likelihood of finding a match between a family and a local educator. Comments made by this group of parents ranged from stating that:

whilst other home-based ECE organisations were helpful, they did not have an educator available locally.

to:

the other [home-based ECE organisation] did not get back to us straightaway and then just sent paperwork through.

One parent remarked that they met three PORSE educators they did not 'click with' before settling on a fourth educator, and that they appreciated the choice PORSE offered. Another parent commented that they had one educator for their first child through PORSE that didn't 'gel' and so moved to a second educator. This educator has subsequently been with the parents for both their second child and their grandchild.

A compelling reason given by slightly more than half the parent sample for choosing PORSE as an ECE provider was their perception of centre-based services as an undesirable ECE option. One parent stated that they saw centres as too noisy and not suitable for their son. The same parent commented that centres look really busy from the outside looking in. A similar comment came from a parent who was not comfortable putting her son in centre-based care because there were too many children. Another parent said that she wanted to avoid her 15 month old daughter being overwhelmed in a centre and felt that many children there [in centre-based services] are sick all the time. This parent contrasted the pleasant bedroom her daughter had to herself for sleep times at the educator's house with a hole in the wall available to her at a centre. A visit to a centre with a ratio of 10 children:1 adult resulted in a parent choosing home-based ECE with PORSE to meet the one-on-one individual needs of her very young child. A different parent commented that she didn't get a warm feeling when visiting centre-based services as part of her decision making about the choice of an ECE provider. Yet another parent chose PORSE after her son had an unsatisfactory experience in a large centre-based service, where he was unhappy and did not form a secure attachment relationship, despite the centre stating that secure attachment relationships underpinned their approach.

A quarter of parents interviewed chose PORSE as an ECE provider because of the range of services on offer and the support for educators.

All parents in the evaluation sample said that cost was not an issue for them compared with the quality of the PORSE service. Whilst affordability was always important, the main considerations for parents in choosing PORSE were the PORSE philosophy of secure relationship attachments and having the right match of educator for each child.

4.1.2 What did parents consider were the strengths of PORSE?

Parents chose and remained with PORSE because of a number of strengths in its programme delivery and levels of support. Most of the parents interviewed saw the focus on secure attachment relationships by PORSE as a strength, and felt that this was very important for the development of children, particularly for those under three years of age. The following comments from parents express the importance of this essential aspect of the PORSE philosophy for their children:

- Vital to have the stability and care between 11 months and two years as we have had for our child.
- Secure attachment relationship is a great development tool for my daughter.
- Really important having one-on-one time with an established person rather than lots of children and a few staff with little individual contact.
- Secure attachment relationship is a strength of PORSE as my son is 19 months old.
- Very important for my daughter to have a secure attachment relationship and not be overwhelmed as she would be in a centre.

One parent talked about the strong bond between her family and the educator:

My daughter is really settled with her new educator, she is a friend of her original educator who is currently on maternity leave. My daughter already knew her new educator because she had had PORSE play dates at her house. I feel that there is a community of caring with PORSE - my daughter and the whole family meet other people through PORSE, and other educators know and care about my daughter. When my daughter goes to the educator's, it is like sending her to an aunty's house.

Another parent talked about the reassurance she felt from discussing with her child's educator the professional development the educator was undertaking to turn her job into a career. The parent and educator identified and discussed the beneficial flow-on effect of the educator's training to the child.

Support for the educator was seen as pivotal to the success of PORSE by half of the parent sample, and parents appreciated that the training the educators received benefitted their children. Parents were aware of frequent support visits by programme co-ordinators to educators, and that these visits had a monitoring component. One parent said it was good to have independent feedback. Another parent said she was blown away by the support for educators, and a third parent commented that educators feel they are in a real career choice – working through papers to a qualification.

Two parents pointed out that the national scale of PORSE as an organisation enabled it to provide extensive support and resources to the educator.

The way in which PORSE kept parents informed about the results of programme co-ordinator visits and new and planned workshops and events was seen as a strength by three quarters of the sample of parents. Parents felt very welcome at workshops and seminars like the Brainwave Trust seminar, and appreciated being able to take part. Email reports of the programme co-ordinators' visits kept parents informed about their children's progress and about how the educators were progressing in their professional development programmes. A parent whose child was with a Russian educator, to ensure continuity of cultural awareness, prized education and ongoing training for the educator stated:

The educator knows a lot about Russian education and children, but is learning about New Zealand education through PORSE.



Just over a quarter of the sample of parents talked about Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) opportunities as a strength of PORSE. These parents valued highly the range of PORSE Playgroups and PlaySchools, music and art activities, events and outings available. One parent saw that these opportunities brought the worlds of parents and educators together through the children.

Home-based ECE, and therefore PORSE, was seen as reducing the amount of sickness for young children, and therefore reducing the amount of time parents missed work because of this, by having a smaller number of children together with an educator as opposed to large numbers of children in centre-based ECE. This was important to a quarter of the parents interviewed.

Other strengths of PORSE mentioned by parents were:

- the PORSE administrative support mechanisms around pay and paperwork, seen by six parents as very efficient, and described variously as fantastic and outstanding;
- a good process for matching educators and children, mentioned by three parents, with all three parents commenting on PORSE offering a choice of educators and working hard to get the 'right' match; and
- staff in PORSE Community Teams, who were responsive, approachable and very friendly.

The need for improvement in administrative support was noted by two parents and three educators and referred to poor communication or inaccurate recording of information that resulted in confusion, distress, and time being wasted.

Individual stakeholders made useful suggestions about improvements to curriculum support documentation.

4.1.3 How responsive is the PORSE service to parent needs?

A number of the strengths of PORSE identified by parents in the sample were also given as examples of the responsiveness of PORSE to parent needs and support as follows:

- the majority of parents felt well informed about events and workshops and felt welcome when they attended;
- most parents have found administration support to be smooth and supportive, with particular mention of the flexibility PORSE shows around any contract changes that are required;
- several parents commented on how PORSE staff were friendly, and administration systems were efficient and flexible – one parent commented that nothing is ever a problem, whilst another parent, who works in the retail industry, said she was therefore keen on good customer service - which PORSE has;
- a third of parents mentioned that they valued the support and advice they received from educators, and that they appreciated the progress reports they received from programme co-ordinators after their visits to educators' homes; and
- support for programme co-ordinators was seen as very important because of the beneficial flow-on effect for both children and parents.

One parent stated that:

Support for the educator is support for my son: the information the educator gets from the programme co-ordinator feeds back to helping my son and extending him - parents can also learn and contribute and so there is a flow-on effect.

There were only two suggested improvements to the level or kind of support parents received from PORSE, and each came from an individual parent. One parent had experienced some difficulties with administration and communication, with incorrect information being recorded and a lack of clarity in a PORSE e-mail, and another parent had not received regular newsletters.

4.1.4 To what extent are parents involved in their child's learning?

All parents in the sample were involved to some extent in goal setting for their children.

Half of the parents talked with their children's educators about individual goals they wanted for their children. These individual goals included:

- a child learning to walk with confidence;
- a child getting shoes on and off;
- behaviour boundaries in interactions with other children;
- educator working to replace the post-operation focus a child had on her 'snuggly' with social interactions;
- visits to the library and shared reading (educator and child);
- learning rhymes; and
- maintaining Russian as a first language and understanding Russian cultural celebrations.

Almost half the parents in the sample set broad goals with the educator for their child. These included goals that related to:

- physical development;
- good language development;
- confidence building;
- building independence; and
- socialisation

Some parents left it to the educator to set goals around their child's current play interest, for example one boy was interested in baking and had a goal one week of making a banana cake, while another boy was very interested in forms of transport and was exploring this with the educator through play, and noting and discussing different forms of transport on walks.

Many parents, almost half of those interviewed, deliberately worked with the educator to achieve goals, ensuring that the learning environment at home complemented learning as recorded in their child's journal. Goals ranged widely from a goal around toilet training, to a parent who wanted to continue breastfeeding her daughter and went round to the educator's house to do this in her lunch hour, to encouraging a child to talk in full sentences rather than just verbs or nouns.

All parents received feedback on their children's activities and achievements, as well as any issues or incidents, through daily informal discussion either with nannies or at pick up and drop off times at educators' homes. All parents also received more formal feedback through journals, which provided a valuable record of their children's progress.

The journal was considered to be an important tool in involving a parent with their child's learning. One parent noted they understood their child's day through details of sleeping, eating, who came to visit (neighbours, grandparents of other child), songs my child was singing, and what they have done.

Another parent was appreciative of how the journal lists books read and daily activities, plus notes little achievement steps (eg one foot on rung of climbing frame). Yet another parent referred to how the journal:

Talks about how language is developing, opportunities for art work - painting and chalk drawings. A scrapbook of art work, what is written in the daily journal and photos - together these give a very clear picture of my son's progress.

Educators recorded children's activities and achievements in journals through comments, learning stories, the visual evidence of photos, and through stickers that related achievement to the goals in Te Whāriki. Several educators e-mailed parents photos that captured special moments for their children as they happened, such as a music lesson or party. One parent mentioned she received texts during the day to let her know her child was about to go for a walk or start a new activity.

A quarter of parents stated that email feedback they received from programme co-ordinators was regular, clear and valued. One parent said of the monthly reports that they give a good snapshot of my child's progress.



They are informative on planning for my child's learning and talk about PORSE activities that are coming up.

4.1.5 To what extent would parents recommend PORSE to other parents?

All parents interviewed said that they would recommend PORSE to other parents, with one parent adding the caveat that PORSE did not always communicate clearly. The reasons parents gave reflected the strengths they had listed.

4.1.6 What could PORSE improve on in the future?

The majority of parents were very happy with the way in which PORSE was operating in terms of programme delivery and support. A few made individual suggestions as to what PORSE could improve on in the future as follows:

- PORSE should develop a career pathway with on the job training for an ECE qualification to meet need.
- There is good support for the educator, but training on Te Whāriki for educators could improve to make it clear that while there needs to be a standard there should be flexibility of approach and activities for the educator.
- Clearer communication and more accuracy in recording administration details are needed from administration staff.
- Newsletters should be e-mailed to all parents and all e-mails signed with contact details.
- Would like to have a backup person from PORSE if an educator is needed because a child's usual educator is sick or is away on a long break. It would be good to visit that person sometimes and get to know them.
- Would be good to have information sheets that show what PORSE does to support the educator.
- Perhaps more technology could be made available to check your account online.
- A discount for parents who want full-time ECE for their children.

4.2 The extent to which PORSE meets the needs of educators

4.2.1 Why did educators choose PORSE?

Most of the sample of educators chose working for PORSE because they had an expectation of support. Comments from educators show that for most of them their choice of PORSE related to their expectation of ongoing training, gaining qualifications, and support throughout that journey. They believed that it was important for an educator to develop skills and to have a support network:

- I wanted to go as far as I could with training – I saw this as an attractive feature of PORSE. I expected PORSE to give support, and once I had met the programme co-ordinators, who were informative, I felt good, comfortable, and relaxed.
- The main reason I chose PORSE was that I didn't have a formal qualification but knew I would get training with PORSE on the job.

- I expected support for myself as an educator and regular visits from programme co-ordinators. I expected opportunities to meet other educators and build a support network.
- I didn't know much about home-based education in New Zealand, therefore I am pleased to have support from PORSE for New Zealand ECE. PORSE explained their programme co-ordinator support - I have a great programme co-ordinator who gives me great ideas and new knowledge. I have just completed Level 3 - I hadn't expected a qualification - it was an extra.
- I have just finished my Level 3 qualification with PORSE and see work as a career not just a way of making money.

Some educators had worked with other ECE organisations, or had worked for themselves caring for children, and for them it was particularly important to have support that they had previously lacked. Educators commented, with reference to home-based ECE organisations other than PORSE:

- Staff from the organisation did visit, but you were just a number. Support is important; it's always available from PORSE and they follow through on queries.
- Liked being a carer but bored because no education and few EOTC options. When talked to PORSE realised a lot of options were available with them.
- Went to PORSE because it is large, and offers support, PlaySchools and Nature PlaySchools.



Other forms of support that attracted educators were the support PORSE gave educators with tax and with handling payments from parents. The other main reason educators gave for choosing to work for PORSE was that they wanted a job where they could be more available for their own children by being at home. Over a quarter of educators gave this as the reason for their choice. One educator commented that:

I have built being an educator around my own daughter. I saw a different career pathway and an opportunity to be at home with her - she was 15 months old then and is now four years old. I haven't looked back since then.

Another parent contrasted her previous ECE job with that of being a PORSE home-based educator:

I had worked in ECE centres then I started with PORSE when my first child was nine months old, which allowed me to stay at home doing something I enjoyed. I wouldn't go back to being in a centre.

I can give one-on-one love and nurturing and attention in home-based ECE, for example a two and a half year old boy came to me from a centre where he had sat in a corner for six months. He had never spoken at the centre and his parents thought he was introverted. Once he came to me he was happy, talking and interacting with my other PORSE children. He made good friends with them

Nearly three quarters of the educators interviewed said they had heard about PORSE through friends or family, or had been attracted by an advertisement, for example in a newspaper or on the radio. Some educators had done their own research on different ECE providers and liked the PORSE philosophy and values.

All educators in the sample loved their work and said that financial reward was not the main factor in their choosing PORSE. Their main consideration was the support, philosophy and quality of service that PORSE offered, and the opportunity to work from home. One educator said that being a PORSE educator was her dream job because of her passion for working with children while being with her own children. Another educator commented that I wanted to be at home and care for my own children and be paid - being an educator increases my feeling of self worth. Yet another educator stated that the pull is the work itself.

4.2.2 What did educators consider were the strengths of PORSE?

Educators chose and remained with PORSE because of a number of strengths in its programme delivery and levels of support. The majority of educators (three quarters) agreed that the support they received from programme co-ordinators and other PORSE staff was a great strength. Educators made particular mention of the following:

- I always have support with PORSE. The PORSE programme tutor is really supportive, and when I ring National Support Office they know about me. My experience of a centre was that there was no support and no strong relationships.
- My programme co-ordinator gives me support by being there to talk to and by giving me lots of creative ideas and support around Te Whāriki and building strands into planning.
- Support is definitely a strength. I can call Regional Office for support on issues eg dealing with parents and the development of one of the PORSE children I was concerned about. I can speak with consultants or programme co-ordinators – all are responsive, friendly and approachable. I hear back from them either the same or the next day.

Half of the educator sample considered professional development and training to be a strength of PORSE, with a number of educators having achieved the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care (Level 3). One parent stated that:

The best thing about PORSE is that they train the educator.

while another parent commented:

Training is great with monthly activities for educators and developmental evenings where parents can come and learn as well.

Almost half of the educators interviewed said that the focus of PORSE on the philosophy of secure attachment relationships was a strength. One educator pointed out that:

It is very evident how important secure attachment relationships are through the training and the job, where strong bonds form. This is particularly important for one little girl I look after who was born prematurely.

Several other educators talked about the emphasis that the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care (Level 3) places on secure attachment relationships in child development.

Almost half of the educators felt that the professionalism and approachability of PORSE staff was a strength, with comments like:

PORSE people have a passion for what they do and are consistent in doing it.

and

PORSE staff are friendly, sociable and like a family.



A different group, comprising almost half of the educators, felt that the help they received with resources was a strength of PORSE. They noted that as well as having access to physical resources like painting and baking kits, ideas and strategies were passed on by programme co-ordinators, and workshops were built around the identified needs of educators.

The opportunities PORSE offered for EOTC and socialisation through PlaySchools, gym, music and special days like Wheel Days were seen by some educators as a strength of PORSE, whilst individual educators mentioned as strengths the flexible and relaxed way in which PORSE staff worked with families, and the way in which the low adult: child ratio allowed educators to get to know children and families well.

4.2.3 How responsive is the PORSE service to educator needs?

Almost all of the educators interviewed were very happy with the level of support they received from PORSE. This support took a number of forms such as support for flexibility of hours for holidays, illness or crises, changing contract hours, and administrative support on tax and pay. Over a quarter of educators referred specifically to the very good support they had from programme co-ordinators:

- Programme co-ordinators are always available and follow through on queries and requests. They provide lots of resources and put courses in place.
- My Programme co-ordinator has been amazing on supplying ideas.
- Training support has been very good – I have just been signed off as a PORSE Professional. Great support from my programme co-ordinator - very supportive and encouraging of what I am doing and good with suggestions.
- Support from the programme co-ordinator is awesome – she is there whenever needed.
- Support from my programme co-ordinator for my working with children and my study is very good and has made a big difference to me.

Three educators felt that they worked directly with families rather than with PORSE on flexibility around hours. One educator expressed concern about pay that had not always been processed in a timely manner. Some concern was expressed by educators in Christchurch about having to move out of their homes for earthquake damage repairs and the disruption that would cause to their ability to function as PORSE educators.

4.2.4 To what extent are educators involved in children's learning?

All educators interviewed were involved in goal setting and providing informal and formal feedback to parents on their children's development and achievements. All educators set individual goals for children. Sometimes these were set with parents, and sometimes parents entrusted educators to set goals around children's current play interests. The setting of individual goals varied widely and included the following scenarios:

- The educator and a boy's mother built on his interest in counting and set a goal for him of incorporating numbers in games he played such as hopscotch, or simple board games with dice.
- Parents of a two year old Chinese boy didn't want their son to get cold, wet or dirty. They wanted him to be happy and settled and learn English, and set goals with his educator accordingly.
- A goal for one girl was to work towards her expressing herself verbally with other children – she stared at something she wanted rather than ask for it, and ignored children when asked to give something up.
- Two brothers had stayed on a marae with their parents and had goals that included te reo and tikanga.
- Construction was a goal for one boy who showed interest in making things from wood. The boy's parents were delighted that the educator's husband, who was a carpenter and wore a tool belt, got the boy a mini tool belt and provided him with wood for carpentry.
- Parents agreed goals with the educator around their children developing and maintaining awareness of the Russian language and culture. Children had books read in Russian and were involved in cultural performances.
- One girl was still unsure of all colours, therefore the educator set an individual goal of colour recognition for her and planned fun activities around this, supported by the programme co-ordinator.

A quarter of the educators interviewed set group goals for children based on strands of Te Whāriki, for example a group goal set around the Exploration strand was centred by one educator on the swan plant and the life cycle of the monarch butterfly, and by another educator on road maintenance and learning about different types of equipment used.

Informal feedback about children's development and achievements was given by all educators to parents at drop off and pick up times. Educators commented that parents really valued these opportunities to have immediate feedback and open communication about their children.

Journals, which provided a more formal record of children's learning and achievements, were shared by all educators with parents, and went home for parents to read and write comments. Journals are a permanent record of learning stories, photos, art work and development notes for families to keep. Educators commented that:

- Journals are important because they will note things like the first steps a child takes or when they have learned to climb.
- It is important for parents to see that physical record with day trips, goals, photos, achievements, proud moments.
- Journals are full of photos, journalled comments and stickers, and make a lovely record of the children's progress. Journals include goals, highlights of the day, photos, art work (made stars for Christmas), and learning stories.
- Photos are in the journal and learning stories eg a boy drew his wider family and was talking about where they all are during the day - daddy is at work, mummy is at work, sister is at school. He processes confronting issues through play - adopting personae to work through issues eg when Mum has to leave to go to work.

Many educators emailed photos or sent texts to parents sharing funny or special moments for their children.

4.2.5 To what extent would educators recommend PORSE to other people thinking of becoming educators?

All educators interviewed said that they would recommend PORSE to other people thinking of becoming educators, and all educators had already made recommendations. Reasons given for recommending PORSE reflected the identified strengths and included these summary comments:

- Being an educator makes you feel good about what you do - your self esteem and enthusiasm increase.
- You know what you do is good for children.
- Parents know centres are not the best for children – they can see home-based is just like family - some have tried centres.
- There is flexibility being the educator - you call the shots because it's your business.
- You feel valued by PORSE - the staff are friendly and supportive.
- PORSE offers training, and the opportunity to network.
- Support is ongoing - when you need PORSE they are there. Support is offered around choice of families, tax, and having a programme co-ordinator offering support with the programme.

4.2.6 What could PORSE improve on in the future?

The majority of educators were very happy with the way in which PORSE was operating in terms of programme delivery and support. Three educators said they would very much like to see PORSE offer a degree that focused on home-based ECE philosophy with home-based practicum. Offering a qualifications pathway through relevant Levels 4 and 5 on the National Qualifications Framework would also offer a career pathway for educators who wanted to focus on home-based ECE. They pointed out that at present an ECE degree requires seven weeks placement in a centre so orientation is not home-based inclusive.

A few educators made individual suggestions as to what PORSE could improve on in the future as follows:

- It would be good if PORSE could facilitate teacher registration maintenance.
- Carry on the workshops offered at conference - offer them more widely because they are inspirational.
- Include educators in planning the PORSE framework. They would bring in ideas, plan events and learn other skills (self development) while doing this. This would also create group cohesion, relationship building, and take some pressure off programme co-ordinators. Educators are passionate and want to contribute their ideas. This would mean a distribution of work through viable contributions.
- Would be good to have educator shared evenings to share ideas and support one another.
- A Māori language component on courses for educators would be good, or even getting together as educators to learn Māori songs at a training evening.
- Put something in Learning Guides for PORSE Professionals on settling ESOL children, for example a Chinese child speaking Chinese to an educator.
- Letting you know what's available in advance and more explanation of length of courses would be good, for example I didn't have it explained that it was only a one day conference in Hawkes Bay recently.
- Would have been better to get information as foundation (PORSE Educator Training Manual) while waiting for children to be enrolled.
- A big change I would like to see is in administrative support - it can dampen parents' enthusiasm if there are errors - like family refunds by mistake then have to pay the educator again. Also payments from a separated couple - child support not going through.

4.3 The extent to which PORSE meets the needs of programme co-ordinators

4.3.1 Why did programme co-ordinators choose PORSE?

All four programme co-ordinators interviewed chose to work for PORSE because of a fit between their own ECE philosophy and that of PORSE. The ECE philosophy of each programme co-ordinator aligned with a belief in a quality ECE service for children, especially young children, characterised by:

- secure relationship attachments with children;
- a low ratio of adults:children; and
- a relationship focus in interactions with other PORSE staff and parents.

In choosing to work for PORSE, all four programme co-ordinators had an expectation of new learning and extension in a supportive environment. They also expected:

- a passion for caring and relationships that extended to staff interactions;
- flexibility in terms of working hours to fit in with their own family commitments; and
- on-going training and professional development to enhance their ECE knowledge and skills base.

In choosing PORSE, the alignment of the PORSE philosophy with their personal and professional values was more important for all four programme co-ordinators than the remuneration they received. One programme co-ordinator summed up this feeling saying:

Pay may be higher in a kindergarten or centre, but PORSE makes you feel far more valued as a staff member. Job satisfaction and happiness (partly to do with the PORSE home-based philosophy) are very important to the programme co-ordinator plus 'family comes first' is a lived philosophy at PORSE.

4.3.2 What did programme co-ordinators consider were the strengths of PORSE?

Programme co-ordinators chose and remained with PORSE because of its philosophy and because PORSE provided better support than other ECE organisations. One programme co-ordinator spoke of the way in which the PORSE philosophy permeated the organisation as follows:

The strength is the 'why' - as a whole organisation, everyone believes in the secure attachment relationship one-on-one. After working for PORSE, I am more aware of the importance of this relationship.

The people who work for PORSE (educators and staff) all believe in the 'why' and these people are a strength of PORSE. It is the foundation behind what people do - it shines through in what they are doing - it is genuine care and respect for children and love of the job.

The support that PORSE provided for programme co-ordinators was described by those interviewed in various ways:

- Teamwork and professionalism.
- Good balance within National Support Office and local staff operating to give support.
- Planning that is accessible at Level 3 and good resources.
- Love the people I work with - the highlight of the work - people are very supportive of one another.
- Courses run and support for programme co-ordinators are good.
- One day focus at conference on programme co-ordinators to help educators with self review.



4.3.3 How responsive is the PORSE service to programme co-ordinator needs?

All four programme co-ordinators interviewed were very happy with the level of support they received from PORSE, making particular mention of a huge amount of flexibility around their job for family needs, sickness, and crises. One programme co-ordinator commented:

PORSE are always accommodating for personal crises. Although it was in my contract that I must attend conference, when my child was very ill PORSE changed my flights. The message was that the child was the most important thing.

There was consensus from the programme co-ordinators that PORSE provided plenty of professional development opportunities. Three programme co-ordinators felt that these opportunities were accompanied by a generous input of resources (financial and time), with one programme co-ordinator commenting that this had increased retention of staff, and another noting that running workshops for educators was one form of useful professional development. One programme co-ordinator felt there could be more proactivity by PORSE in funding relevant tertiary education.

Other forms of responsiveness by PORSE that were mentioned by programme co-ordinators as meeting their needs were:

- having access to resources and particular experts;
- having career opportunities within PORSE as a facilitator and as a coach support to grow and establish relationships;
- responses to queries are just a phone call away: coaches are always there for programme co-ordinators and the area team are a huge support. They are equally helpful with difficult situations and little things;
- everyone has respect for children and adults and everyone has a voice and someone to talk to;
- the job is made challenging and interesting by giving programme co-ordinators the ability to make the role their own; and
- programme co-ordinators are set up with mentors.

4.3.4 To what extent are programme co-ordinators involved in children's learning?

Three of the four programme co-ordinators interviewed talked about goal setting and stated that their involvement was usually to encourage educators to set goals for children. They believed that goals were not always explicit and that it was difficult to show consistent quality in goal setting. One programme co-ordinator noted that educators set both individual as well as group goals using overall themes.

All four programme co-ordinators saw their role as supporting educators to plan, record, and report back to parents in a meaningful way. Programme co-ordinators encouraged educators to undertake professional development and achieve the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care (Level 3) and internal PORSE qualifications to increase their understanding of these processes. Supporting educators to recognise and value the recording of children's progress was also seen as an important part of this. One programme co-ordinator commented:

There are opportunities for very powerful growth for educators from the feedback from programme co-ordinators and benefits for children from the educators' increased understanding.

All programme co-ordinators in the sample sent visit notes to parents that included comments and questions about children's progress. During visits to educators, the programme co-ordinators checked the children's journals which provided snapshots of children's learning and typically showed activities like:

- outings with fire fighters;
- a child cooking a cake for a friend; and
- lots of numeracy and literacy moments, for example awareness of the number, colour and size of bowls at a bowling alley, lining up and counting shoes at PlaySchool and numbers jigsaws.

One programme co-ordinator pointed out that some educators documented learning in their own PORSE daily journals. Another programme co-ordinator emphasised that there needs to be a consistent effort by programme co-ordinators to support educators to engage with Te Whāriki:

PORSE is addressing learning and the need for educators to be educating using Te Whāriki. Programme co-ordinators need to role model this beyond just asking for the placing of Te Whāriki strand stickers on planning.

4.3.5 To what extent would programme co-ordinators recommend PORSE to other people thinking of becoming programme co-ordinators?

All four programme co-ordinators would recommend PORSE to other people thinking of becoming programme co-ordinators, with two programme co-ordinators having already made recommendations.

Reasons given for recommending PORSE included:

- PORSE is all about delivering quality ECE and care for children's futures. PORSE values this because it is child-focussed and what it is trying to do and achieve is for future generations.
- There is support through a national team.
- Lots of variety working with great ECE people – you are not pigeon-holed and have lots of opportunities.
- You feel valued by educators and parents – lots of work satisfaction.
- Career progression and support are readily available.

4.3.6 What could PORSE improve on in the future?

All four programme co-ordinators thought that the greatest improvement PORSE could make would be to offer further professional development to themselves and educators. Suggestions covered specific details relating to need as follows:

- Would be good to build a pathway from Level 3 for careers. Even though Level 3 is the right level for many educators (particularly those for whom English is a second language), a lot of educators have gone to other educational providers for higher qualifications. Above Level 3 educators become PORSE Professionals and are encouraged to lead by example, but this internal qualification is possibly not a sufficiently high stakes qualification as reflected in the uptake of PORSE Professionals.
- Would be great for PORSE to offer training in adult education. This training would strengthen the programme co-ordinator's role. To work with parents and educators effectively, it would be good to have a toolkit of skills around the theory and rationale of working with adults. I am aware that other programme co-ordinators feel a need to have this training.
- It would be good to be supported financially by PORSE if pursuing a tertiary education qualification.

Other suggestions from individual programme co-ordinators included:

- A forum for programme co-ordinators across the country to share ideas and solve problems.
- Consistency and transparency keeping programme co-ordinators in the loop if big changes are planned. Buy-in and willingness to change are easier if everyone involved is kept informed.
- Alignment of programme co-ordinator salary with other jobs that are out there in ECE.

4.4 The extent to which PORSE meets the needs of children

4.4.1 How responsive is the PORSE service to children's physical development needs?

The children of almost all parents in the sample (14 parents) attended PORSE EOTC activities¹⁴ which allowed them plenty of space to develop physical skills and offered opportunities to meet other children for socialisation. Two parents talked about the difficulties their children's educators had being able to attend these activities because of factors such as a lack of transport, a clash with children's sleep times, or pick-ups from kindergartens coinciding with activity times. However these educators had big gardens well-equipped with outdoor equipment, and they regularly took their children to nearby parks for physical activities. These EOTC opportunities were considered by all parents to be a big attraction of PORSE.

All educators interviewed endorsed the views of parents that there was a range of PORSE EOTC activities for children that provided a breadth of opportunities for the development of physical skills and socialisation. One educator stated: Virtually every day PORSE puts on an activity and another educator went through her weekly routine to stress how big a part EOTC activities played in her organisation of each day:

There are activities provided by the local PORSE office, for example Let's Get Active (Olympic type games for children) and bike days (at a farm). I can meet up with friends from PORSE Playgroups twice a week and attend Nature PlaySchools once a week to explore and do bush walks with the children.

There are outdoor resources at the Play groups like a sandpit, bikes, and different activities like wet chalk drawing. I take the children to play dates at other educators' houses. We attend Messy Mondays and Wet Wednesdays, we have Music on Thursdays, and Friday is a home day where we have playdates, walks, wetland trips, and feed the ducks. There are good socialisation opportunities for children and educators.

The four programme co-ordinators in the evaluation sample talked about the EOTC opportunities being hugely important for educators and children, and said that this was reflected in attendance numbers. One programme co-ordinator said that a variety of programmes was provided over the week, month and year, and that it was unlikely any educators and children stay at home all day.

¹⁴ PORSE PlaySchools, Nature PlaySchools, Playgroups and Points/Places of Difference.

4.4.2 How responsive is the PORSE service to children's emotional needs?

All parents interviewed stated that their children were happy, secure and settled with their educators and gave examples of this:

- My daughter has a wonderful emotional attachment to her educator and asks to go to there on Saturdays. The fact that my daughter is so calm and settled makes me very happy.
- My son (22 months old) is very relaxed and happy with his educator – his face lights up on the way to her house.
- Children are an extension of the educator's family and the educator's family are an extension of the parent's family.
- Relationship attachment is very important – it is amazing the way the educator moved my son through separation anxiety – she did everything to settle him and would record how much he played with her and if he was clingy.
- My daughter was shy to start with, encouraged gently by the educator to participate and meet other people. There are secure relationship attachments to both educators we have had and their families – they have become family friends.

All educators in the evaluation sample said that PORSE values the importance of secure attachment relationships, particularly for children up to three years old, and that PORSE training courses explain why this is important and offer practical guidance. Educators told stories of how they had formed strong bonds with children, reflecting on what was needed to help them settle, communicating with parents about this, and seeking support from programme co-ordinators with any issues. These stories included:

- A two and a half year old boy is with me having been moved to PORSE from a different home-based ECE organisation by his parents, who are both blind. He was unhappy when he was with the educator from the other organisation who just parked him in front of her TV. His parents were not listened to by this other organisation, who were not providing the right food for him. The boy is happy and settled now with me.



- I have had a little Chinese ESOL¹⁵ boy for four months. He is nearly two years old, and is with me for seven hours a week. He was difficult to settle because of language difficulties and because he had never been away from his parents before. I was supported by PORSE to keep working with him, and now he is much more settled and understands more English. He gets upset occasionally, but my tone of voice calms him even though he does not always understand. Another five month old girl that came on different days was difficult to settle, and it took seven to eight weeks to settle her. I carried her around in a front pack pouch for the entire time (four and a half hours every day) and this worked. You get very close to the children and make a positive difference for them.
- From being very unsettled and having no friends when they arrived from Scotland, the children have gained confidence to visit new places and make friends. They are settled in their own home and don't want their nanny educator to go home each day.
- The children are very settled and happy and speak Russian when they are with me. One little girl says to me, 'You are our second mother'.
- I have worked through a number of issues settling children, supported by PORSE, for example settling one little girl who is three years old, whose tongue movement had not developed properly (she is currently in speech therapy). I encourage speech and eating (it is hard for her to chew). I work with her parent who asked me for advice about going to consult a speech therapist.

All four programme co-ordinators commented on the support they gave educators through courses that stress the importance of building secure attachment relationships and ensuring a settled environment. This message was reinforced in a number of ways. Programme co-ordinators work alongside educators to help with the settling process for children, and consultants also ring each family to check their child is settling.

¹⁵ Speaks English as a second language.

4.4.3 How responsive is the PORSE service to children's learning needs?

All parents in the sample said that PORSE was very responsive to children's learning needs. Parents saw that this was dependent on the support educators received as well as activities and resources for children. Support for educators came from programme co-ordinators and the professional development PORSE offered, and was significant because children's learning benefitted directly from the educator's own learning and any resultant increase in the educator's knowledge and skills. Parents commented on this factor as follows:

- The receptiveness of the educator to what PORSE offers is extremely important. Parents feel the positive effects of support for the educator from the programme co-ordinator.
- I am a parent and an ECE teacher and I believe that good training supports educators to do a really good job, even though they are not ECE teachers. There are some great educators that offer better ECE than trained teachers.
- PORSE offers support to the educator and so offers a bit of a safety net and a monitoring function of quality by having a consistent, independent approach through this guidance.

Parents also talked about the way in which activities and resources provided by PORSE were responsive to children's needs:

- Recorded in his journal are pictures of my son involved in activities – playing with cars, and reading, which he likes.
- There is great artwork and there are new songs from PlaySchools and music activities.
- Because he is in a small group, the educator tunes in to what my son wants – for example he is ready to learn ball skills.
- At Playgroup on a Wednesday they have activity write up sheets – notes about what children did and what was learned about my son's current learning preference – at the moment he prefers painting to cutting out.

All educators reiterated what parents said, emphasising the support provided for them by PORSE and the way in which their professional development had direct benefits for children's learning.

All four programme co-ordinators talked about how PORSE is supporting learning through an emphasis on educators understanding and using Te Whāriki. Programme co-ordinators saw their role as giving support to educators, and providing them with resources, including ways of recording goals, planning and activities. They saw that children benefitted directly from educators' enhanced knowledge and skills.

4.4.4 What do we learn from the strategic documents about the extent to which PORSE meets the needs of children?

From the Analysis of PORSE Strategic Documents¹⁶ we learn first of all about the intent of PORSE to meet the needs of children through the PORSE Statement of Intent (SoI) 2013-2017¹⁷:

PORSE nurtures babies and young children by offering in-home care in a safe, supportive environment where children can develop a secure attachment relationship with their carer¹⁸.

The PORSE vision is for this standard to become the nationally accepted gold standard of care for babies and young children throughout New Zealand¹⁹ and for it to replace the traditional centre-based care model.



The SoI also sets out the PORSE values²⁰:

Concern

A genuine interest and empathy for others, in particular for the care and education of young children.

Acceptance

A non-judgmental approach which acknowledges individuality.

Respect

To honour and show care towards others while appreciating diversity and differing points of view.

Encouragement

Unconditional support inspiring learners to be confident and independent.

Success

Achieving positive results or outcomes.

¹⁶ Hallmark, S., Analysis of PORSE Strategic Documents, (Hallmark & Associates, 2013).

¹⁷ Maloney, E., Statement of Intent 2013-2017 PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd (PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd, 2012).

¹⁸ Maloney, E., Statement of Intent 2013-2017 PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd (PORSE In-Home Childcare and Training NZ Ltd, 2012), p.2.

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.2.

²⁰ *ibid*.

An important aspect of the SoI is the intent of PORSE to work in partnership with Government by aligning its programmes and future initiatives with key Government priorities and goals. Of particular and current significance are the Government ECE priorities of:

- Increasing the proportion of children starting school who have participated in ECE.
- Improving education outcomes for Māori learners, Pasifika learners, learners with special education needs and learners from low socio economic backgrounds.
- The requirement for all working-aged beneficiaries with pre-school aged children to have their children attend a licensed ECE service for 15 hours a week.²¹

PORSE is already taking steps to enhance its programme delivery to meet these priorities by strengthening its delivery of Tikanga and Te Ao Māori and by developing a targeted strategy that identifies and meets the needs of Pasifika children and families.

At a higher strategic level, PORSE sees the importance of continuing to advocate for the home-based service type, and in increasing the quality of ECE. To this end PORSE intends to continue to design and develop professional development training qualifications, courses and programmes unique to the home-based service type.

Investment and research are seen by PORSE as two further key strategic functions in increasing the quality of ECE. Investment in technology will allow a wider range of reporting mechanisms and enhanced programme options for educators and families²², whereas national research into the important role of home-based care in a child's learning and development will provide an evidence base to support its value for children, their families/whānau and the wider community.

There are a number of strategic discussion papers that explore in detail key aspects of the SOI and inform the strategic direction of the component divisions of PORSE.

The 2012 Strategy Discussion Paper: PORSE Programme states that PORSE is considering the impact of recent research and evidence-based reports that have been released by government organisations and academics on ECE, and consulting key stakeholders on the usefulness of new curriculum planning tools. It is also engaged in reviews of the current delivery and outcomes of implementation of Tikanga and Te Reo Māori programme tools nationally to provide new resources as may be required and to assess key outcomes.

More effective curriculum support tools and training that incorporate feedback from educators and parents as end users will result in PORSE enhancing its contribution to meeting the needs of children. A specific example of this is the NatureLIVE Training that meets the need of children who are urban dwellers to develop an authentic relationship with nature.

²¹ *ibid*, pp. 9-10.

²² *ibid*, p.6.

The 2012 Strategy Discussion Paper: PORSE Education and Training (NZ) Ltd aims to have all educators engaged in completing qualifications²³. PORSE Education & Training is described in the PORSE Education & Training (NZ) Ltd Introductory and Umbrella Self-Assessment Document²⁴ as supporting the requirements of the early childhood education industry, particularly the in-home service type. It partners with PORSE In-Home Childcare & Educator Training (NZ) Ltd to support educators nationwide to gain a quality, nationally recognised qualification that meets Ministry of Education requirements in relation to trained funding. PORSE In-Home Childcare is a key stakeholder of PORSE Education & Training as over 80% of the learners are PORSE educators. In order to achieve the aim of having all educators engaged in completing qualifications, strategies are focused on increasing the number of educators who complete qualifications and on providing support for educators.

Other important features of the 2012 Strategy Discussion Paper: PORSE Education and Training (NZ) Ltd address curriculum matters and a potential qualification pathway that envisages an NZQA accredited Level 4/5 module with a minimum of 15 credits, an adult education programme, and a 'fit for purpose' in-home ECE Diploma.

PORSE is making a well-structured contribution to meeting the needs of children by having educators who are trained to understand child development and Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum, and who can put these understandings into a home-based ECE context.

The 2012 Strategy Discussion Paper: For Life²⁵ states that the purpose of For Life Education & Training (NZ) Ltd is to effectively disseminate current research in the fields of infant and child mental health and holistic development and wellbeing of the child/adult²⁶. The discussion document promulgates a targeted training and education platform to reach a wide public audience that includes the corporate sector, the ECE sector, and parents.

A 'toolbox' of workshops, facilitated by PORSE Master Facilitators, is planned to offer training and education. This will contribute to meeting the needs of children by promoting the benefits, and stressing the importance, of a relationship-based approach and optimal early brain development for children²⁷ in the education sector.

²³ Maloney, E., *2012 Strategy Discussion Paper: PORSE Education and Training (NZ) Ltd* (PORSE Education and Training NZ Ltd, 2011), p.2.

²⁴ Maloney, E., *PORSE Education & Training (NZ) Ltd Introductory and Umbrella Self-Assessment Document* (PORSE Education and Training NZ Ltd, 2011).

²⁵ Maloney, E., *Strategy Discussion Paper: For Life* (For Life Education & Training NZ Ltd, 2011).

²⁶ *ibid*, p.1.

²⁷ *ibid*, p.3.

In November 2012, NZQA conducted an External Evaluation and Review (EER) of PORSE Education & Training (NZ) Ltd. The resultant report provides a valuable external view of the educational performance and self-assessment of this Private Training Establishment (PTE) division of the organisation. The EER noted that most learners who enrol in the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education (NCECE) with PORSE Education and Training complete the qualification (90.3 per cent in 2011 and 2010), and that strong achievement reflects the high level of support provided by programme tutors and the relevance of the qualification to learners, who are mostly completing the NCECE while employed by PORSE In-Home Childcare as in-home early child educators.

For the majority of learners who are in in-home childcare roles, this knowledge is applied directly for the benefit of children and their parents and families.²⁸

4.5 The extent to which PORSE meets the expectations of Government

In 2012 PORSE commissioned a research report²⁹ that looked at the alignment between current government policy documents and research literature on ECE in New Zealand and the approach taken to ECE by PORSE, a home-based ECE provider. The report was designed to help PORSE, and the people and agencies it works with, to see its operation in the wider context of ECE in New Zealand.

The report findings show that the established philosophy and practices of PORSE are well aligned with the indicators of quality ECE that are evidenced by research and that:

Of particular note is the focus that PORSE has on creating secure attachment relationships between educators and children under the age of two. Quality ECE is essential for this group of children to ensure they have good outcomes in both the present and the future³⁰.

The report explores the context of increasing demand for centre and home-based ECE services that can provide flexible all-day ECE services, particularly for children aged less than two years, and concludes that PORSE is well-positioned to match this demand for a number of reasons:

- PORSE already has the lower ratios of children to educators and the small groups that the ECE Taskforce place as priority objectives;
- PORSE is committed to a philosophy based on international research on child development and secure relationship attachment theory;

²⁸ *Report of External Evaluation and Review: PORSE Education & Training (NZ) Ltd (NZQA, 2013), p.7.*

²⁹ Hallmark, S., *Managing Demand and Matching Quality: The Case for PORSE Home-Based Early Childhood Education* (Hallmark & Associates, 2012).

³⁰ *ibid*, p.25.

- PORSE programmes have key quality features that contribute to assurance of a high quality home-based ECE service, for example enablers of quality pedagogy, creating a calm and secure nurturing environment in which to create secure attachments, and ensuring learning outcomes are valued by whānau;
- PORSE values professional development and training, a key aspect of quality ECE provision for children under two years;
- PORSE ensures that educators are well resourced, and are supported by PORSE co-ordinators, who are qualified and registered ECE teachers; and
- PORSE, as a national home-based ECE service provider, is committed to continuous service improvement through conducting robust internal self review

The research report shows that PORSE is well positioned to meet the demands of Government to provide high quality ECE for children within an environment of changing patterns of workforce participation and fiscal constraint.

5. Conclusion

The PORSE SOI shows an intent to nurture babies and young children by offering in-home care in a safe, supportive environment where children can develop a secure attachment relationship with their carer. Other PORSE strategic documents show how PORSE intends to interpret and implement that high level intent to work in partnership with Government to provide high quality ECE for children within an environment of changing patterns of workforce participation and fiscal constraint. The intent of PORSE is to make a well-structured contribution to meeting the needs of children by having educators who are trained to understand child development and Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum, and who can put these understandings into a home-based ECE context. This knowledge can then be applied directly for the benefit of children and their parents and families.

The results from the on-site interviews showed that all stakeholders chose PORSE over other ECE options, and remained with PORSE because of its strengths. These were seen as primarily the PORSE philosophy, characterised by secure attachment relationships with children, a low ratio of adults to children, and a responsive, flexible support network.

The expectation of support, including professional development and training programmes, was a significant factor in the choice of PORSE by educators and programme co-ordinators, and all three groups of stakeholders saw how children ultimately benefitted from this.

Parents were attracted to PORSE by the wide range of services on offer, with EOTC opportunities for children being seen as important. Educators stated that the opportunity to work from home and the support PORSE gave them with tax and handling payments from parents were factors that influenced their choice of PORSE.

A compelling reason given by slightly more than half the parent sample (nine parents) for choosing PORSE as an ECE provider was their perception of centre-based services as an undesirable ECE option. All stakeholders said that cost was not an issue for them compared with the values and quality of the PORSE service. Almost all stakeholders were very happy with the responsiveness of PORSE to their needs and with the kind and level of support they received from PORSE.

All parents in the sample were involved to some extent in goal setting for their children with their educators and received feedback on their children's activities and achievements, as well as any issues or incidents. This feedback occurred through daily informal discussion with educators and through more formal feedback through journals, which provided a valuable record of their children's progress. The journal was considered to be an important tool in involving a parent with their child's learning. All four programme co-ordinators saw their role as supporting educators to plan, record, and report back to parents in a meaningful way, and to send visit notes to parents that included comments and questions about children's progress.

PORSE was seen by all stakeholders as being highly responsive to children's physical, emotional and learning needs, and all stakeholders said that they would recommend PORSE to others, and cited the strengths of PORSE as the reason for doing so.

6. Gap Analysis and Recommendations

The need for a career pathway with on the job training for a fit-for-purpose home-based ECE qualification was mentioned by all three groups of stakeholders as being extremely important. One programme co-ordinator also mentioned the value of having training in adult education to enhance their role. Educators and programme co-ordinators saw value in having forums for sharing ideas and having input into the strategic direction of PORSE.

The need for improvement in administrative support was noted by two parents and three educators and referred to poor communication or inaccurate recording of information that resulted in confusion, distress, and time being wasted.

Individual stakeholders made useful suggestions about improvements to curriculum support documentation.



APPENDIX

Evaluation and Investigative/prompt questions

Evaluation Questions (coded EQ)

The total sample for the face-to-face interviews on-site can be seen in the following table:

EQ1 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of parents?

EQ2 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of educators?

EQ3 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of Programme Co-ordinators?

EQ4 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of children?

EQ5 To what extent does PORSE meet the expectations of Government?



Investigative Questions

For EQ1, there are five investigative questions (coded IQ), and a number of prompt questions.

EQ1: To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of parents?

IQ1.1 As a parent what made you choose PORSE for your child's early childhood education (ECE)?

Prompt question: What were your expectations of PORSE?

Prompt question: What do you think are the strengths of PORSE?

Prompt question: How did the service cost and quality offered by PORSE affect your choice?

IQ1.2 To what extent have your expectations of PORSE been met?

Prompt question: How responsive is the PORSE service to your child's needs (physical, emotional, learning)?

Prompt question: How responsive is the PORSE service to your needs as a parent (flexibility of your home or the educator's, flexibility of hours, goals for your child, liaison with other agencies, feedback on your child's progress)?

Prompt question: To what extent does your child have a secure attachment relationship with the educator and a settled environment where satisfactory learning is occurring?

Prompt question: To what extent are you involved in your child's learning (individual goals set with you, information about your child's learning and progress shared)?

Prompt question: To what extent is your child participating in, and benefitting from, socialisation with other children and adults in PORSE PlaySchools, Nature PlaySchools, and Points/Places of Difference?

IQ1.3 How well does PORSE support you?

Prompt question: What kind of support does PORSE offer you, and how happy are you with the level and kind of support?

Prompt question: Would you like to see a change to the level or kind of support PORSE offers, and, if so, what would you like to see?

Prompt question: How does the support offered by PORSE compare with what other ECE providers have to offer?

IQ1.4 Would you recommend PORSE to other parents?

Prompt question: If so, why? If not, why not?

IQ1.5 Is there anything you think PORSE could improve on in its future development?

Prompt question: For programme delivery?

Prompt question: For support?

For EQ2, there are five investigative questions (coded IQ), and a number of prompt questions.

EQ2 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of educators?

IQ2.1 As an educator what made you choose PORSE?

Prompt question: What were your expectations of PORSE?

Prompt question: What do you think are the strengths of PORSE?

Prompt question: How did the financial reward of being a PORSE educator and the quality of service offered by PORSE affect your choice?

IQ2.2 To what extent have your expectations of PORSE been met?

Prompt question: How responsive is the PORSE service to the needs of children (physical, emotional, learning)?

Prompt question: How responsive is the PORSE service to your needs as an educator (flexibility of hours, provision of resources and support required)?

Prompt question: To what extent do the PORSE children enrolled with you have a secure attachment relationship with you and a settled environment where satisfactory learning is occurring?

Prompt question: To what extent are you involved in the learning of PORSE children enrolled with you (individual goals set with parents, information about the children's learning and progress shared with parents)?

Prompt question: To what extent are the PORSE children enrolled with you participating in, and benefitting from, socialisation with other children and adults in PORSE PlaySchools, Nature PlaySchools, and Points/Places of Difference?

IQ2.3 How well does PORSE support you?

Prompt question: What kind of support does PORSE offer you, and how happy are you with the level and kind of support? (training, ongoing P.D., visits from programme co-ordinators, getting together with other educators).

Prompt question: Would you like to see a change to the level or kind of support PORSE offers, and, if so, what would you like to see?

Prompt question: How does the support offered by PORSE compare with what other ECE providers have to offer?

IQ2.4 Would you recommend PORSE to other people thinking of becoming educators?

Prompt question: If so, why? If not, why not?

IQ2.5 Is there anything you think PORSE could improve on in its future development?

Prompt question: For programme delivery?

Prompt question: For support?

For EQ3, there are five investigative questions (coded IQ), and a number of prompt questions.

EQ3 To what extent does PORSE meet the needs of Programme Co-ordinators?

IQ3.1 As a Programme Co-ordinator what made you choose PORSE?

Prompt question: What were your expectations of PORSE?

Prompt question: What do you think are the strengths of PORSE?

Prompt question: How did the financial reward of being a PORSE educator and the quality of service offered by PORSE affect your choice?

IQ3.2 To what extent have your expectations of PORSE been met?

Prompt question: How responsive is the PORSE service to the needs of children (physical, emotional, learning)?

Prompt question: How responsive is the PORSE service to your needs as a Programme Co-ordinator (flexibility of hours, allocation of educators, provision of resources and support required)?

Prompt question: To what extent do the PORSE children enrolled with your allocated educators have a secure attachment relationship with the educators and a settled environment where satisfactory learning is occurring?

Prompt question: To what extent are you involved in the learning of PORSE children enrolled with your allocated educators (individual goals set with parents, information about the children's learning and progress shared with parents)?

Prompt question: To what extent are the PORSE children enrolled with your allocated educators participating in, and benefitting from, socialisation with other children and adults in PORSE PlaySchools, Nature PlaySchools, and Points/Places of Difference?

IQ3.3 How well does PORSE support you?

Prompt question: What kind of support does PORSE offer you, and how happy are you with the level and kind of support? (training, ongoing P.D., getting together with other programme co-ordinators).

Prompt question: Would you like to see a change to the level or kind of support PORSE offers, and, if so, what would you like to see?

Prompt question: How does the support offered by PORSE compare with what other ECE providers have to offer?

IQ3.4 Would you recommend PORSE to other people thinking of becoming programme co-ordinators?

Prompt question: If so, why? If not, why not?

IQ3.5 Is there anything you think PORSE could improve on in its future development?

Prompt question: For programme delivery?

Prompt question: For support?

