

# Managing Demand and Matching Quality:

The Case For  
PORSE Home-Based  
Early Childhood  
Education





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# 1. Executive Summary

This research report looks at the alignment between current government policy documents and research literature on early childhood education (ECE) in New Zealand and the approach taken to ECE by PORSE, a home-based ECE provider.

Recent Government taskforce and sector advisory reports, together with extensive research evidence, have focused on how to provide high quality ECE for our children, our country's most valuable resource. This focus is taking place within an environment of changing patterns of workforce participation and fiscal constraint.

As more parents, and in particular mothers, return to employment or training, the demand for child places in ECE services is increasing. Parental demand is for services that can provide flexible all-day ECE, particularly for children aged less than two years. This pattern of ECE enrolments has resulted in a greater demand for centre and home-based provision, with home-based services currently having the fastest growing percentage of service provision in the ECE sector.

The matching of quality services to meet parental demand is the focus of the ECE Sector Advisory Group (SAG), who are tasked with improving sector-wide quality *through fostering an environment of increased professionalisation and continuous improvement in the ECE sector.*<sup>1</sup> Such is the concern about the provision of quality ECE for children aged less than two years that the SAG has issued a separate report on improving the quality of ECE services for this vulnerable group. The SAG also recommends a review of existing funding mechanisms to encourage higher quality in the sector through the introduction of rewards and incentives. This review is currently underway.

Part of the Government's commitment to high quality ECE for all children is the identification of priority learners. Priority learners in ECE are identified by the Education Review Office (ERO) as children who are Māori, Pasifika, from low socio-economic backgrounds, those with diverse needs, and children up to the age of two years.

Quality in ECE is defined as complex and as a culturally-specific term. It is seen by the SAG as a process of learning and teaching actions that lead to the achievement of learning outcomes valued by whānau. ERO has identified a number of interrelated features and indicators of high quality ECE.

Extensive neurobiological research on the early years of a child's development indicates that the early attachments an infant experiences lay a foundation for their health, relationships and resilience later in life.

<sup>1</sup> Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report on Sector-wide quality* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.1.



Research into quality ECE for children aged less than two years identifies enablers of quality pedagogy and structural indicators of quality as two important groupings of factors that should be considered to ensure quality provision for this age group. Extensive neurobiological research on the early years of a child's development indicates that the early attachments an infant experiences lay a foundation for their health, relationships and resilience later in life. The ECE Taskforce acknowledges that the sequential synthesis of experiences as a child's brain develops over time makes early experiences, and therefore early attachments, of great importance for healthy human development. The SAG report on improving the quality of ECE services for children aged less than two years refers to three key aspects that are interconnected: child ratios, group size, and staff qualifications.

The ECE Taskforce has a vision for the future of the ECE sector where provision will be characterised by an appropriate ratio of teachers to children and a culture of continuous quality improvement, and where accurate information about the performance of different services will be available for parents.

The ECE sector in New Zealand has unity at a national policy level but offers diversity at a structural, organisational and philosophical level. Working parents are constrained in their choice by a pragmatic need to find an ECE provider that has the flexibility they require. Home-based ECE services can offer a greater degree of flexibility than centre-based services, and, if parents so wish, an educator can provide ECE services in the child's own home, thereby providing a secure and familiar environment for the child, whilst at the same time avoiding travel to a centre. This flexibility is particularly advantageous in rural areas where there may be less access to ECE centres.

Home-based ECE services function with small group sizes and low ratios of children to teachers, and therefore are characterised by two of the three key aspects of quality ECE for children under two years. Centre-based ECE, on the other hand, can only achieve these quality aspects through the training of more teachers, which has a financial cost at a time of fiscal constraint. Although the training of more teachers for centres is seen as desirable by the ECE Taskforce, it is only mooted at present, projected for consideration at the end of the third phase of a proposed process.

Home-based ECE services can offer a greater degree of flexibility than centre-based services, and, if parents so wish, an educator can provide ECE services in the child's own home, thereby providing a secure and familiar environment for the child, whilst at the same time avoiding travel to a centre.



One of the greatest strengths of quality home-based ECE is one of its main philosophical tenets – that of being able to provide an educator who is able to form a secure attachment with a young child in a calm and settled home environment. Co-ordinators who are registered teachers support the work of home-based educators. Home-based services who understand the value of professional development and training provide this for their educators.

PORSE is a well-established national home-based education service. In 2011 PORSE had a 38.9% share of the home-based ECE market<sup>2</sup>, and currently is working with 5,439 families, 2,546 educators and 7,097 children. The findings in this report show that the established philosophy and practices of PORSE are well aligned with the indicators of quality ECE that are evidenced by research. 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 based on secure attachment relationships is essential to ensure that young children have good outcomes in both the present and the future.

As a home-based ECE service, PORSE already has the lower ratios of children to teachers and the small groups that the ECE Taskforce place as priority objectives. The report findings clearly indicate that PORSE values professional development and training, a further key aspect of quality ECE provision for children under two years. Educators are well resourced, and are supported by PORSE Co-ordinators, who are qualified and registered ECE teachers. Workplace training is provided to help educators acquire the knowledge and skills base needed to work effectively with children, recognising learning opportunities and planning learning outcomes valued by parents and family/whānau. PORSE offers educators the NZQA approved National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care (Level 3), a distance education course with self-paced learning, offered with regular contact and study options. The need for a fit for purpose qualification to meet the service type is recognised by PORSE as a logical progression for its future development, as part of the organisation's commitment to continuous quality improvement.

The comprehensive range of information in this report is 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.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz>.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Purpose of research report

The purpose of this research report is to look 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. This research report makes a contribution towards PORSE's self review.

### 2.2 Background

#### 2.2.1 The importance of early childhood education and recent policy initiatives

The importance of ECE has been reaffirmed by successive New Zealand governments over the last two decades. Well resourced policy initiatives have provided the basis for delivering that education through a national curriculum, *Te Whāriki*,<sup>3</sup> and teacher education programmes to professionalise the workforce.

A plethora of early childhood services with different functional structures and approaches exists (see 3.2) within a regulatory and monitoring framework *designed to promote safe environments and good learning outcomes for children*.<sup>4</sup> ERO provides independent reviews of early childhood services, with a focus on the capacity of each service to promote these positive learning outcomes for children. The new ECE review methodology uses a complementary approach to external evaluation (ERO review process) and internal evaluation (service self review). The information from its self review processes can be used by an early childhood service to identify contributing factors and priorities for enhancing children's learning and wellbeing, and lets an early childhood service know how it is promoting positive outcomes for children.<sup>5</sup>

Children's participation in high quality ECE has benefits that are long term and lasting. These include social and economic benefits, improved child wellbeing and learning outcomes as a foundation for lifelong learning, more equitable outcomes and reduction of poverty, and increased intergenerational social mobility.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education, *Te Whāriki, Early Childhood Curriculum* (Learning Media Ltd, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.12.

<sup>5</sup> Education Review Office, *ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services, The Child – the Heart of the Matter* Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa (DRAFT) (New Zealand Government, 2012), p.12.





The vision for the future ECE sector is set out by the ECE Taskforce in its final report as:

*an early childhood sector that delivers high quality services to all children, supports parents, and has a strong sense of collective identity among those working in the sector.<sup>6</sup>*

The 2012 ECE SAG reports<sup>7</sup> both draw on a number of pertinent research documents by ERO, the ECE Taskforce, the Children's Commissioner, and a literature review on quality ECE for under-two-year-olds for the Ministry of Education, all of which acknowledge the findings from established research that children's participation in high quality ECE has benefits that are long term and lasting. These include social and economic benefits, improved child wellbeing and learning outcomes as a foundation for lifelong learning, more equitable outcomes and reduction of poverty, and increased intergenerational social mobility.<sup>8</sup>

The 2011 inquiry of the Children's Commissioner into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers, states Children are any country's most valuable resource. This is echoed by the ECE Taskforce which reiterates at various points in its final report that financial investment in ECE is the best investment a nation can make, with the caveats that the practices being funded are effective, and that parents and employers 'step up' to take responsibility alongside the Government.

<sup>6</sup> Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.5.

<sup>7</sup> Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report on Sector-wide quality* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012) and Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report - Improving quality of early childhood education services for children aged less than two years* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Education Review Office, *ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services, The Child – the Heart of the Matter Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa* (DRAFT) (New Zealand Government, 2012), p.5.



## 2.2.2 Significant increase in participation in early childhood education

In its revision of methodology for reviewing early childhood services,<sup>11</sup> ERO notes that in the last decade there has been a significant increase in children's participation in ECE. This increase is seen by the ECE Taskforce as attributable to economic pressures and consequent changing patterns of workforce participation.<sup>12</sup> Its effects are particularly noticeable for the infant and toddler under-two age group, which Carroll-Lind & Angus point out has *the fastest growing number of enrolments in formal non-parental early childhood services (ECS) in New Zealand*.<sup>13</sup> Increased participation in ECE by the under-two age group is recognised by the ECE Taskforce as requiring a concomitant shift in the provision of places to meet future demand.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2.3 Trends in enrolments in types of services

The final report of the ECE Taskforce states that the types of ECE services with the highest increase in enrolments from 2006 to 2010 are centre-based services and home-based services. These types of services generally offer a full day of programmes, they are flexible and require minimal involvement of parents, unlike kindergartens, playcentres and kōhanga reo. It is thus easy to see why centre-based services and home-based services appeal to working parents who are in employment, training or study.

Other types of ECE services that do not necessarily offer a full day of programmes for a child, and often expect a degree of parental involvement, have seen a decline in their enrolments - kindergartens since 2006, and Playcentres and Te Kōhanga Reo to a lesser extent since 2007.<sup>15</sup>

The final report of the ECE Taskforce states that the types of ECE services with the highest increase in enrolments from 2006 to 2010 are centre-based services and home-based services.

<sup>9</sup> Carroll-Lind, J., Angus, J., *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, New Zealand, online 2011), Foreword, p. xiii.

<sup>10</sup> Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.13 and p.16..

<sup>11</sup> Education Review Office, *ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services, The Child – the Heart of the Matter Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa* (DRAFT) (New Zealand Government, 2012), p.5.

<sup>12</sup> 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.3.

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Education. (2010a). Education counts. <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/ece> in Carroll-Lind, J., Angus, J., *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, New Zealand, online 2011), p.1.

<sup>14</sup> Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.3.



Enrolments for the under-two age group have trended upwards since 2002. The SAG report on services for children aged less than two years notes that:

*Enrolments by under one year olds (8,779) and one year olds (25,415) have grown by 58% and 51% respectively since 2002 and currently represent 17.5% of total enrolments.*<sup>16</sup>

The report goes on to state that the majority of these enrolments are in centre-based services (20,127), with home-based services having 5,866 enrolments and Playcentres 5,612.

#### 2.2.4 Priority learners

It is a priority for the Government that all children have the opportunity to participate in high quality ECE. Priority learners in ECE are identified by the Ministry of Education<sup>17</sup>, ERO and Carroll-Lind & Angus as children who are Māori, Pasifika, from low socio-economic backgrounds, those with diverse needs, and children up to the age of two years.<sup>18</sup>

The ECE SAG report on sector-wide quality notes ERO's identification of a number of services that do not deliver education that is responsive to Māori identity, language, and culture.<sup>19</sup> This has particular significance as two-thirds of Māori learners that participate in ECE participate in mainstream early childhood services. Similar concerns exist for Pasifika learners not enrolled in Pasifika immersion or bilingual services. However, data that explores how Pasifika culture, languages and identities are recognised and responded to, in order to help learners succeed, is not as readily available.

Enrolments for the under-two age group have trended upwards since 2002.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, p.11.

<sup>16</sup> Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report – Improving quality of early childhood education services for children aged less than two years* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.1.

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Education, *Statement of Intent 2012-2017* (New Zealand Government, 2012), p.16-18.

<sup>18</sup> Education Review Office, *ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services, The Child – the Heart of the Matter Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa* (DRAFT) (New Zealand Government, 2012), p.8. and Carroll-Lind, J., Angus, J., *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, New Zealand, online 2011), Foreword p.iv.

<sup>19</sup> Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report on Sector-wide quality* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.2.



ECE services catering to learners from low socio-economic backgrounds (as measured by NZDep decile) are over-represented in those that received a supplementary ERO review (ERO data available in 2011). This, together with evidence that supplementary reviews have decreased in wealthier areas, suggests that services catering to learners from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to provide poor quality ECE.

An anticipated report by ERO on the inclusion of learners with special needs in ECE will provide the Ministry of Education with information to assist them in addressing the needs of this group.<sup>20</sup>

The ECE SAG report draws on recent research that points out the potential for long-term damage to toddlers and infants (for example lower educational achievement and increased crime<sup>21</sup>) if they do not experience quality ECE, and links this with an ERO monograph on infants and toddlers that found only half of the children under two years old in ECE experience quality settings.<sup>22</sup>

### 2.2.5 Fiscal constraints and implications for funding

Recent policy documents reporting on ECE in New Zealand address the need for a prolonged period of fiscal constraint and recommend reform of funding and the regulatory environment within which ECE operates.

The ECE Taskforce believes that reducing variance in quality, and ensuring access to quality ECE services for all children, can initially be effected within existing funding levels. The ECE SAG, reporting on sector-wide quality, makes reference to the findings of the ECE Taskforce, recommending a review of existing funding mechanisms to encourage higher quality in the sector. Suggestions of incentives and rewards for quality above regulated minimum standards include consideration of factors like lower ratios of children to teachers and higher levels of registered teachers, together with levels of responsiveness to children and communities, appropriate language or cultural competence skills of early childhood service teachers, and targeted enrolments of priority learners.

The ECE SAG report on improving the quality of services for children aged less than two years considers that current funding arrangements do not provide parents with sufficient flexibility around enrolment hours, and recommends that the ECE funding review consider:

- *more flexible funding for infants and toddlers in ECE (eg absence rules)*
- *how to better support infants and toddlers with special needs and their families*<sup>23</sup>

A Sector Advisory Group on ECE Funding has been established by the Minister of Education with meetings scheduled for June and July 2012.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, p.2.

<sup>21</sup> Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.59.

<sup>22</sup> Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report – Improving quality of early childhood education services for children aged less than two years* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.1.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, p.6.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz>.



## 3. Research focus and findings

### 3.1 What defines quality for early childhood education?

#### 3.1.1 How do we recognise quality in early childhood education?

The notion of quality ECE is now enshrined in a 30-year tradition of debates in the English-speaking world.<sup>25</sup> This debate started with a focus in the 1980s on the features of early childhood provision that formed the basis of licensing standards such as adult:child ratios, caregiver behaviour, and the physical environment. In New Zealand it had the added dimensions of:

- *appropriate curriculum planning and implementation*
- *appropriate caregiver qualifications*
- *te reo Māori and tikanga Māori*
- *consistent care and education – low turnover of staff*
- *partnership between early childhood services and the parents and whānau*
- *safe and healthy environment*
- *a close relationship with the community.*<sup>26</sup>

The debate has since ranged through a multi-dimensional notion of quality in 1990s ECE to a notion of quality built around early childhood pedagogy with the introduction of *Te Whāriki*. ECE itself experienced an accretion of understandings from different disciplines added to those from childhood development, while the New Zealand early childhood curriculum had considerable influence at an international level on pedagogical discourses.

The notion of quality ECE is now enshrined in a 30-year tradition of debates in the English speaking world.

<sup>25</sup> Dalli, C., White, E.J., Rockel, J., Duhn, I., with Buchanan, E., Davidson, S., Ganly, S., Kus, L., & Wang, B., *Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like? A literature review. Report to the Ministry of Education* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.26.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, p.40.



Most recent views of quality have incorporated the ideas of reflective practice, and self review using action research. There has been an increasingly accepted view that quality is complex, and that quality services are something that children have a right to<sup>27</sup>. Findings from neurobiological research have been used to create arguments to improve the quality of children's experiences and interactions in group-based early childhood settings, and there is widespread consensus that more research is needed into the multi-perspectival construct of quality in ECE.

The ECE Taskforce, in its final report, reiterates the current notion of quality by pointing out that it is *a contested and culturally-specific term*, and referring to a 2003 European report which concluded that *definitions of quality and what should be measured depend on cultural values and wider understandings of childhood*.<sup>28</sup> The report acknowledges research on the key importance of high quality ECE in achieving the best outcomes for young children, and puts forward the following definition of quality:

*Quality early childhood education derives from the factors and processes that cause (i.e. are not merely correlated with) good outcomes for children who experience it.*<sup>29</sup>

Most recent views of quality have incorporated the ideas of reflective practice, and self review using action research.

<sup>27</sup> Carroll-Lind, J., Angus, J., *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, New Zealand, online 2011), Foreword p.11.

<sup>28</sup> Mooney, A., Cameron, C., Candappa, M., McQuail, S., Moss, P. & Petrie, P., *Early years and childcare international evidence project* (London: DfCS, 2003) referenced in Penn, H., *Early childhood education and care: Key lessons from research for policy makers* (Brussels: European Commission, 2009), p.32, in Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report on Sector-wide quality* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.41.

<sup>29</sup> Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.41.





ERO has enjoyed the debate by outlining a number of features of high quality ECE services, stressing that it is the interrelationship of these features that leads to good learning opportunities for young children:

- *leadership*
- *philosophy*
- *vision*
- *relationships and interactions*
- *teaching and learning*
- *assessment and planning*
- *professional learning, qualifications and support*
- *self review*
- *management*.<sup>30</sup>

ERO has also developed sets of evaluation indicators for early childhood that *provide a framework that allow for judgements to be made about what is being practised and the difference between what is enacted and high quality practice*.<sup>31</sup>

The vision that the ECE Taskforce has for the future of the ECE sector in New Zealand is one of high quality service provision where government licensing of service providers will entail their meeting high standards, and incentives will encourage the promotion of continuous quality improvement through staff education and professional development. An appropriate ratio of teachers to children will be another underpinning factor, as will be the availability of accurate information for parents about the performance of different services.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Education Review Office, *Quality in Early Childhood Services* (New Zealand Government, 2010), p.4.

<sup>31</sup> Education Review Office, *ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services, The Child – the Heart of the Matter Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa* (DRAFT) (New Zealand Government, 2012), p.24.

<sup>32</sup> Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.29.



### 3.1.2 What characterises quality for under two-year olds in early childhood education?

We have already seen that there is a trend towards more children in the under-two age group being enrolled in ECE services, with the majority of these children being enrolled in early childhood centres or in home-based care (see 2.2.3). Research concurs that there is a number of specific factors that should be considered in ensuring quality provision for this age group. In their extensive literature review of quality ECE for under-two-year-olds, Dalli, White, Rockel, & Duhn look at two groupings of factors that overlap:

- enablers of quality pedagogy; and
- structural indicators of quality.

The enablers of quality pedagogy, or process indicators of quality, relate to teacher knowledge and behaviours, with an essential starting point being the establishment and maintenance of consistent attachments between teachers and infants and toddlers (as well as with their families). A basic enabler of quality pedagogy is teachers who can act as intersubjective partners with infants and toddlers. In practice this means teachers who can establish a caring and engaging relationship with children in the under-two age group, and who can maximise opportunities and capacity for learning and development *through interactions that promote heightened levels of intimacy*.<sup>33</sup> Teachers who enable quality pedagogy are those who recognise and use the opportunities for learning that occur within everyday routines and experiences across cultures,<sup>34</sup> and have the ability to understand and respond to the cues given by infants and toddlers during play.<sup>35</sup>

There is some overlap between process and structural indicators of quality through the research findings that emphasise the importance of teacher education and professional development.

*All those who work with young children and parents must understand the brain story and the relationship of play-based problem-solving learning to early brain development.*<sup>36</sup>

Teachers who enable quality pedagogy are those who recognise and use the opportunities for learning that occur within everyday routines and experiences across cultures, and have the ability to understand and respond to the cues given by infants and toddlers during play.

<sup>33</sup> Dalli & Kibble, 2010, in Dalli, C., White, E.J., Rockel, J., Duhn, I., with Buchanan, E., Davidson, S., Ganly, S., Kus, L., & Wang, B., *Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like? A literature review. Report to the Ministry of Education* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.88.

<sup>34</sup> Deans & Bary, 2008; Nimmo, 2008; Warner, 2002; in Dalli, C., White, E.J., Rockel, J., Duhn, I., with Buchanan, E., Davidson, S., Ganly, S., Kus, L., & Wang, B., *Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like? A literature review. Report to the Ministry of Education* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.88.

<sup>35</sup> White et al, 2009; Tomasello et al, 2007; Løkken, 2000; White, 2009; Gonzalez-Mena, 2009; Walker, 2008; in Dalli, C., White, E.J., Rockel, J., Duhn, I., with Buchanan, E., Davidson, S., Ganly, S., Kus, L., & Wang, B., *Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like? A literature review. Report to the Ministry of Education* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.88.

<sup>36</sup> McCain & Mustard, 1999, in Dalli, C., White, E.J., Rockel, J., Duhn, I., with Buchanan, E., Davidson, S., Ganly, S., Kus, L., & Wang, B., *Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like? A literature review. Report to the Ministry of Education* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.118.



A link is seen between inclusive practices with children who are under two, higher level qualifications for teachers, and lower ratios of children to teachers.<sup>37</sup> Other structural indicators of note are the way in which positive working environments for teachers, small group sizes and adult:child ratios (1:3 being seen as ideal) are conducive to low staff turnover, and therefore support consistent ongoing relationships with infants and toddlers.

The SAG report refers to evidence in what is referred to as the *iron triangle*<sup>38</sup> of improving quality for the under-two age group. This shows three key aspects that are interconnected: adult:child ratios, group size, and staff qualifications.

The importance of quality ECE for children under two years is clearly stated by the SAG:<sup>39</sup>

*ECE is one of the single biggest influences on education achievement, with effects still apparent at age fifteen and older. ECE can support better employment, income, criminal justice and health outcomes and a more productive and cohesive society overall. Investment in ECE is more cost effective than investment at any other stage of education.*

### 3.1.3 What does research tell us about the underpinning precepts of quality in early childhood development?

A body of neurobiological research on the early years of a child's development indicates that the early attachments an infant experiences lay a foundation for their health, relationships and resilience later in life. Gerhardt states that the care an infant receives actually shapes the developing nervous system, and is a determinant of how stress is interpreted and responded to in future years.<sup>40</sup> Gluckman points out that the attachment between a mother and her infant:

*is more than simply a behavioural relationship; it involves the action of a number of hormones in the brain, and secure attachment is an important predictor of resilience in later life, including higher self-esteem, reduced anxiety and reduced hormonal responses to stress.<sup>41</sup>*

A body of neurobiological research on the early years of a child's development indicates that the early attachments an infant experiences lay a foundation for their health, relationships and resilience later in life.

<sup>37</sup> Hestenes et al, 2007, in Dalli, C., White, E.J., Rockel, J., Duhn, I., with Buchanan, E., Davidson, S., Ganly, S., Kus, L., & Wang, B., *Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like? A literature review. Report to the Ministry of Education* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.119.

<sup>38</sup> Munton et al, 2002, in Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report – Improving quality of early childhood education services for children aged less than two years* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.3.

<sup>39</sup> Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report – Improving quality of early childhood education services for children aged less than two years* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.2.

<sup>40</sup> Gerhardt, S., *Why love matters: How affection shapes a baby's brain* (East Sussex: Brunner-Routledge, 2004), p.64.

<sup>41</sup> Heckman, J.J., *Skill formation and the economics of investing in disadvantaged children*. *Science*, 2006; 312: 1900-1902 in Gluckman, P., *Improving the Transition: Reducing Social and Psychological Morbidity During Adolescence* (Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee, New Zealand, 2011), p.26.



Siegel and Hartzell offer the following simple chart to explain categories of attachment:<sup>42</sup>

Category of attachment	Parental interactive pattern
Secure attachment	Emotionally available, perceptive, responsive
Insecure – avoidant	Emotionally unavailable, imperceptive, unresponsive; and rejecting
Insecure – anxious/ambivalent	Inconsistently available, perceptive and responsive; and intrusive
Insecure – disorganised	Frightening, frightened, disorienting, alarming

An infant is entirely reliant for survival and a feeling of well-being on an adult who is emotionally available and is attuned to respond to their needs and feelings in a non-verbal way. Usually this adult is the infant's mother, and once a pattern of reliable response has been established, a secure attachment forms between mother and infant.

*What seems to be most crucial for the baby is the extent to which the parent or caregiver is emotionally available and present for him, to notice his signals and to regulate his states.<sup>43</sup>*

A newly born infant relies on their mother for early regulation - her touch, her warmth and her feeding regulate their physiological functions such as heart rate and blood pressure, growth and stress hormone levels.

Recent research around young children has shown that well regulated children with secure attachment relationships do not release high levels of cortisol under stress, whereas insecure children do.<sup>44</sup> Cortisol is a stress hormone produced in response to fear or uncertainty. The amygdala is the part of the brain that reacts to any social situations that generate uncertainty or fear by sending out neurochemical messages that activate the hypothalamus. In response the hypothalamus triggers the pituitary which in turn triggers the adrenal glands. This is known as the HPA stress response (the hypothalamic - pituitary - adrenal axis). The adrenal glands generate extra cortisol to provide additional energy to focus on the stress.

High levels of cortisol are dangerous in the early months of life as they can affect the development of other neurotransmitter systems that are still in the process of being established. Once stressed, these various biochemical systems may become adversely affected in ways that make it more difficult for the individual to self-regulate their emotions as an adult.

Well regulated children with secure attachment relationships do not release high levels of cortisol under stress, whereas insecure children do.

<sup>42</sup> Siegel, D.J., & Hartzell, M., *Parenting from the Inside Out* (J.P.Tarcher Penguin, 2004), p.107.

<sup>43</sup> Gunnar and Nelson, 1994; Gunnar et al, 1996; Nachmias et al, 1996; Essex et al, 2002; in Gerhardt, S. *Why love matters: How affection shapes a baby's brain* (East Sussex: Brunner-Routledge, 2004), pp.57-59 and 65-70.

<sup>44</sup> Gunnar and Nelson, 1994; Gunnar et al, 1996; Nachmias et al, 1996; Essex et al, 2002; in Gerhardt, S. *Why love matters: How affection shapes a baby's brain* (East Sussex: Brunner-Routledge, 2004), pp.57-59 and 65-70.



While formal cognitive skills are starting to develop in early childhood, Gluckman states that this phase in child development also provides:

*a critical window in which the broader range of non-cognitive but crucial life skills are established which promote school achievement, job performance and financial security.*<sup>45</sup>

Gerhardt explains that a developed orbitofrontal cortex, linked to the right side of the brain, is necessary to develop these non-cognitive life skills - the capacity to empathise, and to grasp the big picture. It is the orbitofrontal cortex which is largely responsible for *managing emotional behaviours and responding to other people and their emotional cues*.<sup>46</sup> Gerhardt further explains that the orbitofrontal cortex develops almost entirely after birth and does not begin to mature until the infant becomes a toddler, so that brain development is dependent upon the experiences and relationships an infant or toddler has.

These new findings in the field of neuroplasticity underscore the important role that parents and caregivers play in shaping the development of a child's brain. Although the brain remains plastic, with the ability to change and learn throughout life, if it is under or over-stimulated for children under two years, particularly for language and emotional development, its abilities can be reduced considerably.<sup>47</sup> It therefore becomes of paramount importance that parents and caregivers provide the kinds of experiences that will help children develop resilience through a well-integrated brain.<sup>48</sup>

The ECE Taskforce acknowledges that the sequential synthesis of experiences as a child's brain develops over time makes early experiences, and therefore early attachments, of great importance for healthy human development. Both the SAG and the ECE Taskforce concur that the risks of low-quality ECE are seen to be particularly harmful for the under-two age group, with the SAG citing Gluckman:

*Early childhood is the critical period in which executive functions such as the fundamentals of self-control, judgement, evaluation of risk, reward behaviours and what might be called wisdom are established.*<sup>49</sup>

Brain development is dependent upon the experiences and relationships an infant or toddler has.

These new findings in the field of neuroplasticity underscore the important role that parents and caregivers play in shaping the development of a child's brain.

<sup>45</sup> Knudsen, E.I., Heckman, J.J., Cameron, J.L., Shonkoff, J.P., *Economic, neurobiological, and behavioral perspectives on building America's future workforce. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. 2006; 103: 10155-10162 in Gluckman, P., *Improving the Transition: Reducing Social and Psychological Morbidity During Adolescence* (Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee, New Zealand, 2011), p.27.

<sup>46</sup> Gerhardt, S., *Why love matters: How affection shapes a baby's brain* (East Sussex: Brunner-Routledge, 2004), p.36.

<sup>47</sup> Szalavitz, M., & Perry, B.D., *Born For Love* (HarperCollins, 2011), p.90.

<sup>48</sup> Siegel, D.J., & Bryson, T.P., *The Whole-Brain Child* (Delacorte Press, 2011), p.8.

<sup>49</sup> Gluckman, P., *Improving the Transition: Reducing Social and Psychological Morbidity During Adolescence* (Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee, 2011) in Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report – Improving quality of early childhood education services for children aged less than two years* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.2, and Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.59.



Carroll-Lind & Angus look at the mitigations quality service provision and quality relationships in ECE can provide around brain development and attachment. Features of risk mitigation include a number of the indicators of quality ECE:

- *small group sizes*
- *low ratios of children to teachers*
- *the use of primary carers*
- *managed durations in care providing calm environments*
- *nurturing, sensitive, responsive and consistent relationships between infants and knowledgeable staff.*<sup>50</sup>

### 3.2 What are the different features of early childhood education services?

The ECE sector in New Zealand has unity at a policy level but diversity at a structural, organisational and philosophical level. Early childhood services are unified by the requirements to meet regulated standards, employ teachers who meet qualification requirements, and implement a bicultural curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. Diversity has occurred over time, as explained in *Te Whāriki*:

*as new needs have emerged, existing services have changed and new services have developed, each with a distinctive approach to early childhood education.*<sup>51</sup>

Parents, therefore, have a number of choices depending on the type of early childhood service:

- Structural differences involve a choice of session or full day programmes and different age ranges of participating children.
- Organisational differences are characterised by choices of management and ownership models and the way in which local communities participate.
- Philosophical emphases involve a choice of approach, environment, and cultural perspectives.

The ECE sector in New Zealand has unity at a policy level but diversity at a structural, organisational and philosophical level.

<sup>50</sup> Carroll-Lind, J., Angus, J., *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, New Zealand, online 2011), Executive Summary p. xvii.

<sup>51</sup> *Te Whāriki, Early Childhood Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1996), p.17 in Carroll-Lind, J., Angus, J., *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, New Zealand, online 2011), p.22.



ERO notes that diversity also occurs through the different resources available in urban and rural settings, and Carroll-Lind & Angus note that the children who use these services are also a diverse group in terms of age and ethnicity.<sup>52</sup>

Points of difference between ECE and education in the school sector are outlined by ERO as:

- *Attendance at an early childhood service is not compulsory.*
- *Decisions about how much and what type of ECE service to use are made by parents.*
- *The costs of ECE are generally shared between the government and parents.*
- *Few early childhood services are owned by the Crown.*
- *Children can be enrolled in more than one kind of early childhood service at one time.*<sup>53</sup>

The basic differences in structure, organisation and philosophy of early childhood services can be seen in the Appendix.

### 3.3 Managing demand and matching quality: the case for home-based early childhood education

At present ECE services licensed under the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 or the Education (Playgroups) Regulations 2008 receive government funding.<sup>54</sup> The taskforce proposes, through the new funding system, a future focus on support for high quality, licensed teacher-led services.<sup>55</sup>

As a result of economic pressures and changing patterns of workforce participation, more and more parents are looking for ECE Services that cater for children from birth to five years and offer all-day ECE services with flexibility to suit individual needs around part-time hours (refer to sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3). This has resulted in an increased demand for two specific New Zealand teacher-led ECE services, centre-based ECE, and home-based ECE. Home-based services currently have the fastest growing percentage of service provision in the ECE sector.

Home-based services currently have the fastest growing percentage of service provision in the ECE sector.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p.22 and Education Review Office, *ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services, The Child – the Heart of the Matter Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa* (DRAFT) (New Zealand Government, 2012), p.5.

<sup>53</sup> Education Review Office, *ERO's Approach to Reviews in Early Childhood Services, The Child – the Heart of the Matter Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa* (DRAFT) (New Zealand Government, 2012), p.5.

<sup>54</sup> Carroll-Lind, J., Angus, J., *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, New Zealand, online 2011), p.22.

<sup>55</sup> Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.76..



Embedded in the increased demand for teacher-led services is an increasing demand for all-day ECE services for infants and toddlers, a group at risk of long-term damage if they do not experience quality ECE.

Clearly the challenge is how to best match this demand with quality ECE provision, and for parents to consider the relative merits of the two main service contenders - centre-based ECE, and home-based ECE.

Parents are constrained by a pragmatic need to find an ECE provider that has the flexibility they require. This flexibility is more difficult to find in centre-based ECE services, which by their very nature are fixed in one place and are restricted by the operational requirements of running a relatively large scale service on business premises. Home-based ECE services can offer a greater degree of flexibility because they are able to build individual programmes and service hours around the needs of small numbers of children and their parents. If parents so wish, an educator can provide ECE services in the child's own home, thereby providing a secure and familiar environment for the child, whilst at the same time avoiding travel to a centre. This flexibility is particularly advantageous in rural areas where there may be less access to ECE centres.

We have already seen (section 3.1.3) that the mitigations of potential risk for children under two years highlighted by Carroll-Lind & Angus include a number of the indicators of quality ECE: small group sizes; low ratios of children to teachers; the use of primary carers; managed durations in care providing calm environments; and nurturing, sensitive, responsive and consistent relationships between infants and knowledgeable staff.

Home-based ECE is able to provide these small group sizes, low ratios of children to educators as teachers (working closely with parents and whānau) and the use of primary carers, as its operation is in fact defined by such considerations – licensing requires a maximum ratio of four children to each home-based educator, with no more than two children aged less than two years in that allocated number. Centre-based ECE, on the other hand, has built into its viability the need to generate enough enrolments to be able to provide suitable premises and resources.

Home-based ECE services can offer a greater degree of flexibility because they are able to build individual programmes and service hours around the needs of small numbers of children and their parents.



Although mooted funding reforms for ECE aim to reduce centre group sizes and bring ratios down (to one adult to four children for children under two years old, and of one adult to ten children for children aged three to six years old)<sup>56</sup> these are still only proposals, merely projected for consideration at the end of the third phase of a staged process:

*We consider that by the end of phase three, Government will be in a position to consider further quality reforms such as regulating for ratios of 1:4 for children under two years old.*<sup>57</sup>

While the improvement to adult:child ratios is indisputably a worthwhile aim to produce overall higher quality ECE in centres, it is important to note that the training of additional teachers to effect those changes in ratios brings with it additional costs at a time of fiscal constraint.

One of the greatest strengths of quality home-based ECE is one of its main philosophical tenets – that of being able to provide an educator who is able to form a secure attachment relationship with a young child in a calm and settled home environment. As we have seen, research on the early years of a child’s development indicates that the early attachments they experience lay a foundation for their health, relationships and resilience later in life (refer to section 3.1.3). A home-based educator becomes a significant adult who, working closely with parents, can provide a consistent and attuned focus on nurturing their child.

Co-ordinators who are registered teachers support the work of home-based educators, as acknowledged by the Ministry of Education:

*Some co-ordinators may help parents choose the right educator for their child and this person will support the child’s learning programme. The co-ordinator visits the home-based caregiver/educator regularly to check on the child’s safety and wellbeing and their learning progress.*<sup>58</sup>

Home-based services that understand the value of professional development and training provide this for their educators.<sup>59</sup> This training can range from courses on baby care, early brain development, or *Te Whāriki* to support in completing the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care.

A home-based educator becomes a significant adult who, working closely with parents, can provide a consistent and attuned focus on nurturing their child.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*, p.40.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, p.36.

<sup>58</sup> Ministry of Education, *Choices in Early Childhood* (<http://www.ece.govt.nz>), p.2.

<sup>59</sup> Carroll-Lind, J., Angus, J., *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children’s Commissioner, New Zealand, online 2011), p.24



## 3.4 Nurturing our future: the case for PORSE home-based early childhood education

### 3.4.1 What are the key quality features of the PORSE home-based early childhood education model?

Established in 1994, PORSE has developed from an initial programme to guide early childhood students undertaking practicum in family homes to a national company providing home-based ECE services and work-placed training. A National Support Office (NSO) and community teams support working relationships between family and educator. In 2011 PORSE had a 38.9% share of the home-based ECE market<sup>60</sup>, and currently is working with 5,439 families, 2,546 educators and 7,097 children.

PORSE is licensed and regulated by the Ministry of Education and reviewed by ERO. PORSE co-ordinators visit homes on a monthly basis to support educators working with children and their families, to document aspects of the programme and to carry out health and safety checks. 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 teachers. 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.<sup>61</sup>*

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

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz>.

<sup>61</sup> Harvey, T., Johnstone, C., Mintrom, M., Pulton, R., Reynolds, P., Smith, A., Tamati, A., Tafa, L., Viviani, R., *An agenda for amazing children: final report of the ECE taskforce* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2011), p.135.



The following aspects of the PORSE philosophy and programme contribute to assurance of a high quality home-based ECE service:

### Learning outcomes valued by whānau

The PORSE Programme is unique to each family and is developed by supporting a selected educator who works within the child's context of family, home and community. The PORSE Programme focuses on a relationship-based approach to learning, with educators who become significant others in the lives of the children they nurture. The PORSE Vision is for educators and co-ordinators to meet parents in their homes, in their early days of parenting, and to partner with them to invest in the future of their children. The active involvement of educators, parents, family and whānau is a key factor in the success of the PORSE Programme and in determining positive life-long outcomes for young children. Extracts from recent PORSE ERO reports state that:

*Educators show genuine care for the social and emotional well being of children. They take pride in documenting children's activities. Daily conversations with educators keep parents well informed about their children's activities.*<sup>62</sup>

*Educators are warm, responsive and respectful. They foster children's social and emotional development. Their positive relationships with parents and families contribute to the quality of the learning experiences and care children receive.*<sup>63</sup>

*Families are kept well informed of events and activities through journals, newsletters and the service's web-site. Educators talk regularly with parents discussing progress and sharing relevant information. Children benefit from this holistic approach to their care and education.*<sup>64</sup>

This vision fits with the ECE SAG's and the ECE Taskforce's views of quality as a culturally-specific term: *quality ECE will be evidenced where all children experience learning and teaching interactions which lead to those learning outcomes valued by whānau* (refer to section 3.1.1).

The PORSE Vision is for educators and co-ordinators to meet parents in their homes, in their early days of parenting, and to partner with them to invest in the future of their children.

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Pukekohe-S1-01-06-2011>.

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Mana-Q2-22-03-2011>.

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Mt-Maunganui-Q1-14-03-2011>.

<sup>65</sup> Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report on Sector-wide quality* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.1.



## Creating secure attachment relationships

The PORSE Programme is based on the fundamental belief that children need safe, stimulating natural environments to support early brain development, a natural unfolding of development, and adult-supported connections for life-long learning. Infancy is acknowledged as a time for forming secure attachment relationships, with the infant needing to stay effectively connected to a caring, committed, sensitive educator in order to cope with both new and familiar experiences. Extracts from recent PORSE ERO reports state that:

*A feature of the service is the affirming and respectful relationships established between educators and children. Positive interactions within homes enhance children's social and communication skills. Children confidently approach educators who are highly responsive to their interests and care needs.<sup>66</sup>*

*Adults know children's strengths and recognise the learning in play. They extend children's development through thoughtful resource provision, conversations and visits to community places of interest. Home-based experiences are complemented by a range of well-planned, tutor-led group sessions. Children experience warm, nurturing interactions with educators and develop secure trusting relationships and a sense of belonging.<sup>67</sup>*

## Calm and nurturing environment in which to create secure attachments

PORSE's Mission is focused on supporting all educators to find a strong sense of self and positive behaviours, which will contribute to their own self-regulation and an understanding that their behaviours and ways of interpreting experience are read by the child. Educators are supported to create an inspiring, stimulating environment with positive role-modelling experiences for each child. The PORSE Programme allows educators:

- to work at the pace of young children.
- time to build a nurturing, sensitive, responsive and consistent relationship with children.

The PORSE Programme is based on the fundamental belief that children need safe, stimulating natural environments to support early brain development, a natural unfolding of development, and adult-supported connections for life-long learning.

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Mt-Maunganui-Q1-14-03-2011>.

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Hawke-s-Bay-Q1-18-02-2011>.



- time to recognise how children instinctively want to learn - how their learning emerges through the educator's skill of connecting, communicating and collaborating with the individual child's learning patterns.<sup>68</sup>

The PORSE Programme allows children time for the unfolding of their development and individual potential in a calm and nurturing environment, where they can create secure attachments. Extracts from recent PORSE ERO reports state that:

*Educators foster children's social and emotional development, and children benefit from warm, caring interactions in familiar environments.*<sup>69</sup>

*Aspects of good practice include children confidently making choices and participating in activities that are meaningful for them.*<sup>70</sup>

### Enablers of quality pedagogy

The values of PORSE reflect the ability of an educator to act as an intersubjective partner with infants and toddlers, recognising and using the opportunities for learning that occur within everyday routines and experiences across cultures, and having the ability to understand and respond to the cues given by infants and toddlers during play:

**Play...** to play alongside your children

**Observe...** to observe and reflect on what you see

**Relate...** to relate, connect and establish a secure attachment relationship

**Support...** to support through play

**Extend...** to extend with loads of encouragement<sup>71</sup>

Educators are supported to create an inspiring, stimulating environment with positive role-modelling experiences for each child.

<sup>68</sup> Adapted from <http://www.porse.co.nz>.

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Grey-Lynn-S1-01-06-2011>.

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Palmerston-North-S1-15-02-2011>.

<sup>71</sup> PORSE, *Programme Handbook* (PORSE In-Home Childcare NZ Ltd, 2011), p.8.



Extracts from recent PORSE ERO reports state that:

*Te reo me ngā tikanga Māori are effectively woven into the programmes for children. Coaches, the consultant and educators respond to parents' aspirations in this area. Māori children's culture is affirmed and valued and all children experience opportunities to learn and grow in their awareness of Aotearoa as a bicultural nation.<sup>72</sup>*

*The child-based programme offers a wide range of experiences. Children are seen as confident and competent learners. Programme tutors and educators strengthen learning opportunities by providing additional playschool sessions to build on children's interests and previous experiences. There is a noticeable focus on children's development and links are made to Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum.<sup>73</sup>*

*Educators prepare their family home to enable children to actively explore a wide range of stimulating learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. Children's involvement in the day-to-day household routines and spontaneous outings supports them to develop as capable, confident and competent learners. Considerable thought is given to providing a programme that positively contributes to the social and academic development of babies.<sup>74</sup>*

A comprehensive range of quality planning and recording tools is available to support educators. These include:

- A Child Programme Journal that PORSE requires educators to complete for a child's programme activities each day. The journal chronicles a child's learning and development and is a tangible way of involving educators, parents, family and whānau in celebrating a child's achievements and planning future directions together.
- A PORSE Individual Programme that links to play options, to a child's programme journal and *Te Whāriki* goals, to individual learning outcomes, and future planning. There is room for educator observations and a family/whānau contribution. A child who has special needs or is participating in an early intervention programme would have this reflected in their PORSE Individual Programme.
- A Current Play Interest worksheet that relates play activities to the strands of *Te Whāriki*.

A comprehensive range of quality planning and recording tools is available to support educators.

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Napier-Q2-16-02-2011>.

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Nelson-S1-16-03-2011>.

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Mt-Manganui-Q1-14-03-2011>.





- Te Ao Māori resources that support the ongoing development of Tikanga and Te Reo in the PORSE Programme.
- A Family and Educator Manual which supports each family to establish a working relationship with their chosen educator and records details of family/whānau child information, daily routines, a child's needs, expectations of the educator's role, authorisations (for example for excursions) and comprehensive Health and Safety requirements such as health and medical information, medicines register, and emergency guidelines. The manual also includes Licensing and Educator requirements.
- A Programme Handbook that outlines available programme tools and provides guidance on completing attendance rolls, subsidies and educator payments, *Te Whāriki*, PORSE PlaySchools and Nature PlaySchools, and Points/Places of Difference. The handbook also contains Licensing and Educator Requirements and PORSE policies.

As well as planning and recording tools, there are a number of screencasts available on YouTube that give guidance to educators on *Te Whāriki*, *How to fill in a Current Play interest sheet*, and *How to fill in a PORSE Individual Programme sheet*.

A working partnership with *For Life Education and Training*<sup>75</sup> gives educators access to guides on:

- *Talk to me (Korero mai)*: communication, conversation and the foundations of language.
- *Growing in Connection (Whakatipu i te hononga)*: understanding the science of relationships and how to build a foundation of love.

*For Life Education and Training* is based on the premise that our relationships shape us, defining who we are and who we will become - not only through infancy and childhood, but right through our lifespan. These guides provide learning about attachment theory and brain development to help create a relationship-based framework to support all parents, teachers and caregivers on their journey.

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.forlifenz.com>.



## PORSE PlaySchools, Nature PlaySchools, and Points/Places of Difference

PORSE PlaySchools offer opportunities for children and PORSE educators to meet in a co-operative setting and to contribute to play sessions. PORSE Nature/Forest PlaySchools offer infants, toddlers and young children opportunities for outdoor exploration, discovery and enjoyment in natural surroundings. The PORSE Nature/Forest PlaySchools provide benefits of exercise, outdoor education, and understanding more about Nature. They fit with Ministry of Education *Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) Guidelines* that see EOTC as an essential aspect of learning for children that extends their learning experiences beyond the classroom *to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the wider community and the environment.*<sup>76</sup>

Points/Places of Difference are where small groups of educators with similar interests come together to socialise, discuss and learn. They allow educators to meet and share knowledge, observations and practice, and they provide an opportunity for children to form friendships and have fun.<sup>77</sup>

## PORSE Co-ordinators

PORSE co-ordinators hold a Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) and a Current Teacher Registration and/or Provisional Registration. They visit educators to provide regular support through home visits, PlaySchools, Outings and Professional Development events, and extra support on a needs basis.<sup>78</sup> The co-ordinator is primarily responsible for supporting educators and enabling them to move to higher levels of understanding in how they nurture and educate children in their care. Their work includes:

- Working alongside educators so that they are able to understand and implement Ministry of Education licensing criteria and regulations.
- Supporting educators to successfully complete their first aid certificate within four months of registering with PORSE.
- Supporting the development of educators through the PORSE Career Pathway, Educator Achievements and the Annual Appraisal Process.
- Establishing, maintaining and recording a contact programme for each family in compliance with PORSE Systems.

PORSE Playschools offer opportunities for children and PORSE educators to meet in a co-operative setting and to contribute to play sessions.

<sup>76</sup> Ministry of Education, *EOTC Guidelines* (Learning Media Limited, 2009), p.3.

<sup>77</sup> PORSE, *Programme Handbook* (PORSE In-Home Childcare NZ Ltd, 2011), pp. 27-29.

<sup>78</sup> PORSE Co-ordinator job description.



- Encouraging the involvement of families in the PORSE Programme and the development and learning of their child.
- Following up on all family feedback.

PORSE Co-ordinators also carry out marking and assessment of learning guides and offer support on-site to secondary school students working through the STAR or Gateway programmes.

### *Let's PORSE and What's the Goss*

*Let's PORSE* is an informative quarterly PORSE publication full of news, articles of interest and stories from educators and parents that keeps the PORSE community in touch and has one million copies distributed free around New Zealand every year.

*What's the Goss* is a weekly publication that focuses on what's happening in PORSE programmes in communities around the country.

### Importance of training and professional development

A key difference between PORSE and other home-based ECE providers is the professional development and training support PORSE provides for educators to become enablers of quality pedagogy (refer to section 3.5).

### Importance of self review

PORSE is committed to ongoing self review and all aspects of organisational improvement. An extract from a recent PORSE ERO report notes:

*Self review is highly developed. The PORSE organisational layers of self review include educators, area team staff and coaching and National Support teams. Educators and area staff are encouraged to extend their learning through professional development and training. Self reflection, feedback and annual appraisal guide educators to improve their practice.<sup>79</sup>*

Points/Places of Difference are where small groups of educators with similar interests come together to socialise, discuss and learn. They allow educators to meet and share knowledge, observations and practice, and they provide an opportunity for children to form friendships and have fun.

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Wellington-East-West-Q2-09-02-2011>.



### 3.4.2 What are the key quality features of a PORSE Programme designed to meet the needs of children under two?

We have already seen from research evidence the importance of parents and caregivers providing the kinds of experiences that will help children develop resilience through a well-integrated brain (refer to section 3.1.3). The SAG report on improving the quality of ECE services for children aged less than two years notes:

*The evidence is clear: the provision of quality ECE is essential to ensure infants and toddlers have good experiences in ECE services that lead to better outcomes in both the present and the future.*<sup>80</sup>

The PORSE Programme for the under-two age group embodies the three key aspects of the *iron triangle* of improving quality for this group: appropriate child ratios, small group size and staff qualifications (refer to section 3.1.2).

In addition to the general key quality features of a PORSE Programme (refer to section 3.4.1), quality experiences for children under two are indicated in the following aspects of programme support for educators:

- A Child Programme Journal that PORSE requires educators to complete for a child's programme activities each day is customised for children under two. The journal links activities to *Te Whāriki* and a child's learning and achievement, special and fun moments, new skills and social interactions. There are records of when a child was awake and asleep, when they were checked on whilst asleep, and notes on their food/drink and toileting needs. Play activities, outings and visitors are noted, as well as favourite books, stories, songs and rhymes. Messages to and from families are recorded to reinforce the partnership of educator and parents.<sup>81</sup>
- An Introductory Guide to the work of PORSE explains how attachment relationships are a key aspect of psychological and emotional wellbeing, and how they lay down the foundation for future patterns of connection and resilience. The guide details how the particular needs of young children are met through the in-home PORSE model that avoids *the large numbers, high ratios, schedules, rosters, noise and turnover*<sup>82</sup> that frequently characterise centre-based ECE. It points out that instead PORSE aims to provide every child in their care with a secure attachment relationship with their educator, based on trust and responsiveness to the child's needs.

The PORSE Programme for the under-two age group embodies the three key aspects of the iron triangle of improving quality for this group: appropriate child ratios, small group size and staff qualifications.

The particular needs of young children are met through the in-home PORSE model that avoids the large numbers, high ratios, schedules, rosters, noise and turnover.

<sup>80</sup> Early Childhood Education Sector Advisory Group, *Report – Improving quality of early childhood education services for children aged less than two years* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2012), p.2.

<sup>81</sup> PORSE, *Child's Programme Journal for children under two* (PORSE In-Home Childcare NZ Ltd, 2011).

<sup>82</sup> PORSE, *The Power of PORSE* (PORSE In-Home Childcare NZ Ltd, 2011), p.10.



- The Introductory Guide to the work of PORSE also provides guidance on how educators can support the early brain development of infants and toddlers through their practice.
- The PORSE Programme Handbook (refer to section 3.4.1) provides guidance on the key characteristics of infants and toddlers and differentiates between the flexibility needed for an infant's daily programme to provide *a predictable and calm environment for the infant that builds trust and anticipation, and the planned approach to a toddler's daily programme to provide a secure environment with planned challenges and predictable happenings*.<sup>83</sup>
- PORSE PlaySchools, Nature PlaySchools, and Points/Places of Difference provide additional opportunities for children under two to meet other children, share learning experiences and have fun (refer to section 3.4.1).
- PORSE Co-ordinators who are qualified and registered ECE teachers visit educators to provide regular support and extra support on a needs basis.

### 3.5 What are the key quality features of PORSE ongoing professional development and training programmes for educators?

PORSE Education & Training is an accredited Private Training Establishment that offers educators the NZQA approved National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care (Level 3), a supported distance education course with study options and self-paced learning. PlaySchools can be used as PlayTutorials, which are group settings that provide more structured learning for educators that want to complete the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care (Level 3).

PORSE educators have a PORSE career pathway that means they work through three levels of internal certification:

1. PORSE Approved eg skills in programme planning and maintaining a safe environment for young children
2. PORSE Certified eg *Te Whāriki* strands and goals and National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care (Level 3)
3. PORSE Professional eg licensing requirements and educator philosophy.

PORSE Education & Training is an accredited Private Training Establishment that offers educators the NZQA approved National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care (Level 3), a supported distance education course with study options and self-paced learning.

<sup>83</sup> PORSE, *Programme Handbook* (PORSE In-Home Childcare NZ Ltd, 2011), pp. 24-25.



A Career Portfolio supports ongoing self-review and reflective practice. This includes photos and stories about learning experiences, successes and challenges, and is an opportunity to look at programme tools and resources on a deeper level.

An extract from a recent PORSE ERO reports state that PORSE has:

*...a strong commitment to developing the professional practices of educators. Tutors encourage and support educators to participate in PORSE training programmes and gain qualifications to increase their understanding of how children develop and learn.<sup>84</sup>*

PORSE also offers a variety of professional development opportunities for educators, with free workplace training, and professional development workshops that include:<sup>85</sup>

- Ongoing First Aid refresher courses.
- Self reflection and performance management.
- Hands on, experiential learning.
- Career portfolios and achievements.
- Learning guides on a range of topics including play, child development, ethics, nutrition, health and safety.
- NatureLIVE which is about educators and children enjoying the wonders of Nature and about giving children freedom and time to explore outdoors.
- PORSE Website access to resources, business support and programme tools.
- PORSE access to MoveIt, an online resource of lifestyle programmes that promote fitness and general wellbeing through training for events and learning more about nutrition.
- Growing in Connection and Talk to Me (PORSE in partnership with *For Life Education and Training*) which focuses on current research around attachment theory and neuroscience.

PORSE also offers a variety of professional development opportunities for educators, with free workplace training, and professional development workshops.

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/Early-Childhood-Reports/PORSE-Lower-Hutt-S2-16-02-2011>.

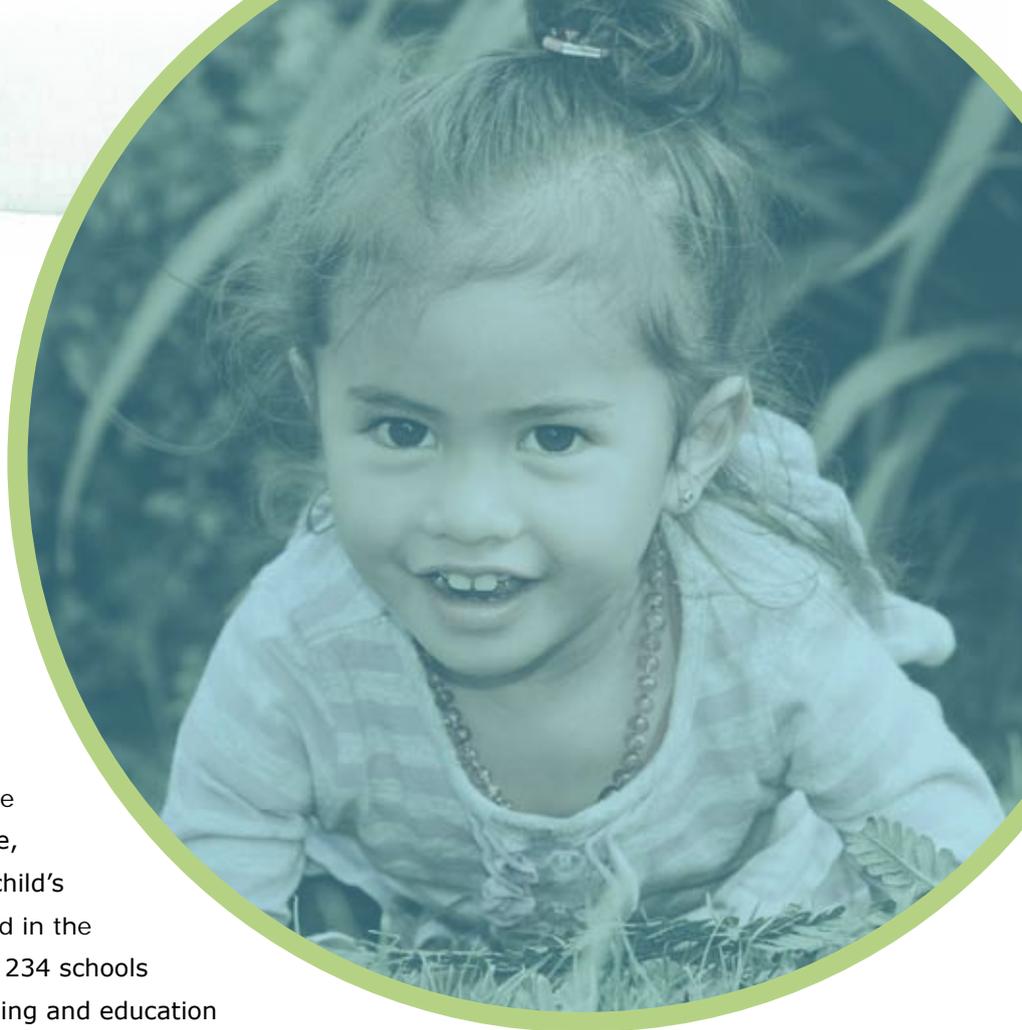
<sup>85</sup> Adapted from PORSE, *Programme Handbook* (PORSE In-Home Childcare NZ Ltd, 2011) and <http://www.porse.co.nz>.



STAR and GATEWAY training and education programmes have been established by PORSE Education & Training in secondary schools, contributing to the Government's Youth Guarantee goal of supporting all 16 and 17 year olds to participate in education or training to help them get to where they want to be.<sup>86</sup>

These programmes are based on Early Childhood Education & Care NZQA unit standards and are designed to encourage students to become more knowledgeable, thoughtful and sensitively attuned to a child's emotional wellbeing and developing mind in the early years. Currently 1,567 students in 234 schools are enrolled in STAR and GATEWAY training and education programmes, giving secondary school students the opportunity to explore a career in early childhood by learning the theory and carrying out the practice in early childhood settings.

It is worth noting that a 2007 Ministry of Education evaluation of education-funded ECE professional development programmes found that there was little available Ministry of Education-funded professional development for home-based educators, despite a 78% rapid growth of the home-based sector from 1995 to 2005.<sup>87</sup>



<sup>86</sup> <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/YouthGuarantee.aspx>.

<sup>87</sup> Cherrington, S., Wansbrough, D., *An Evaluation of Ministry of Education Funded Early Childhood Education Professional Development Programmes* (Ministry of Education, 2007), pp 151-152.



## 4. Conclusion

There is an 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. This demand has resulted in home-based services currently having the fastest growing percentage of service provision in the ECE sector.

PORSE, as a national home-based ECE service provider, is committed to continuous service improvement through conducting robust internal self review. This report contributes to that commitment by considering the alignment between current ECE government policy documents and research literature and the approach taken to ECE by PORSE.

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. 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 future.

As a home-based ECE service, PORSE already has the lower ratios of children to teachers and the small groups that the ECE Taskforce place as priority objectives. The report findings clearly indicate that PORSE values professional development and training, a key aspect of quality ECE provision for children under two years. Educators are well resourced, and are supported by PORSE co-ordinators, who are qualified and registered ECE teachers. Workplace training is provided to help educators acquire the knowledge and skills base needed to work effectively with children, recognising learning opportunities and planning learning outcomes valued by parents and family/whānau. PORSE offers educators the NZQA approved National Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care (Level 3), a distance education course with supported self-paced learning.

PORSE is committed to continuous organisational improvement and to looking further at areas of Government focus such as priority learners and a fit for purpose career pathway with nationally recognised qualifications to meet the service type.

The established philosophy and practices of PORSE are well aligned with the indicators of quality ECE that are evidenced by research. Of particular note is the focus that PORSE has on creating secure attachment relationships between educators and children under the age of two.

Workplace training is provided to help educators acquire the knowledge and skills base needed to work effectively with children, recognising learning opportunities and planning learning outcomes valued by parents and family/whānau.



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## 6. Appendix

The basic differences in structure, organisation and philosophy can be seen in the following descriptions of the main ECE services in New Zealand:<sup>88</sup>

### Centre-based education and care services

- are teacher-led services.
- provide all-day sessions, with some offering flexible part-time hours.
- cater for children from birth to five years.
- are work-based, part of a franchise or corporate company, or owned and operated by a community group, and are licensed by the Ministry of Education.
- at least half of the teachers in charge of the centre must be registered teachers who hold a Diploma in Teaching (ECE) or similar qualification. Other staff in the centre may have different qualifications or experience.
- can have different cultural and philosophical approaches (informed by theories of Rudolf Steiner and Maria Montessori, Magda Gerber, Emmi Pikler; bilingual or immersion centres).
- usually charge fees.

### Kindergartens

- are teacher-led services.
- traditionally provide morning and afternoon sessions.
- predominantly cater for children aged three to five years.
- are managed by a Kindergarten Association and are licensed by the Ministry of Education.
- employ 100 percent qualified and registered teachers if they have sessional licenses.
- have different attendance models that include part days, full days, two or three days per week, or five days per week, with six hours being the usual maximum daily attendance time.
- usually ask for a parent donation or fee.

### Home-based education and care services

- are teacher-led services.
- provide flexible hours for each child, including all-day care and education.
- cater for children aged 0-5 years, with no more than two children aged less than two years with each home-based educator or nanny (unless caring for multi-birth infants).
- are licensed to provide education and care for up to four children in either
- the children or educator's home.
- provide qualified and registered early childhood teachers as co-ordinators to support and supervise the practice of the in-home educators.
- require all home-based educators to hold a first aid qualification.
- usually charge fees.

<sup>88</sup> Carroll-Lind, J., Angus, J., *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, New Zealand, online 2011), Executive Summary pp.23-26 and <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/~media/MinEdu/Files/Parents/ECE/Choices.pdf>.

## Te Kōhanga Reo centres

- are parent-led services.
- provide daily programmes.
- cater for children aged 0-5 years.
- are led and managed by whānau and parents and licensed by the Ministry of Education.
- closely involve parents and whānau in the child's learning and development.
- are licensed by the Ministry of Education, and operate under Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust.
- use a whānau development model, underpinned by elements of cultural and administrative sovereignty and is a total immersion Māori language and tikanga based programme that was born out of the need to revive the Māori language.
- have a whānau contribution system which may vary according to the needs of the whānau. This contribution can be koha, donations for food and/or paying fees.

## Pasifika early childhood groups

- are parent-led services.
- provide daily programmes.
- cater for children aged 0-5 years.
- are mostly owned by incorporated societies and trusts run by Pasifika people for Pasifika children.
- are church or community based where parents help run the sessions.
- build children's knowledge of their own Pasifika language and culture, such as Samoan, Cook Island, Tongan, Niuean, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan, and Fijian.
- offer learning in both English and a Pasifika language or in the Pasifika language only.

## Playcentres

- are parent-led services.
- provide daily programmes where children can attend up to five sessions a week.
- cater for children aged 0-5 years.
- are led and managed by parent cooperatives, with most Playcentres being licensed by the Ministry of Education.
- are linked to regional associations, which belong to the national New Zealand Playcentre Federation.
- are centres where parents, whānau and caregivers meet together to support their children's early learning through play.
- are based on a philosophy that parents are the first and best educators of their children.
- support parents as they learn alongside their young children, with the multi-age grouping enabling siblings within families to all attend the same sessions (Powell, 2008).<sup>89</sup>
- usually charge fees or request donations.

<sup>89</sup> Powell, 2008 in J. Carroll-Lind & J. Angus, *Through their lens, An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers* (Office of the Children's Commissioner, online 2011), p.25.



## Playgroups

- are parent-led services.
- provide one to three sessions per week where no child can attend for more than 4 hours per day.
- cater for children aged 0-5 years, but must have a parent staying with more than half the children attending.
- are community based groups where parents, whānau and caregivers meet together and provide play programmes for their children.
- receive information, support and training from the Ministry of Education.
- that are certificated and meet certain requirements can receive a small amount of Government funding to help pay for equipment and community hall hire.

## The Correspondence School

- is a teacher-led service.
- provides a personalised learning programmes for young children, who can also attend a regular ECE service for up to two sessions per week.
- caters for children aged 3-5 years who live too far away from ECE services, who can't attend other services because they are ill or have a disability, or they shift homes at least once a term.
- works with parents, whānau or caregivers to develop a programme to meet the needs of their child.
- provides parents, whānau or caregivers with information and programmes to help them plan play activities and learning experiences to support their child's learning.







