

10 Year Strategic Plan for early learning – changing role of Govt in early learning

Key changes in the ECE sector

1989 – Education To be More report and Before Five Strategy

- In the 1980s, Govt fully funded kindergartens but provided minimal subsidies for childcare for working parents
- Govt created equity of access to early learning for all children, regardless of the employment status of parents
- Changes also sought to facilitate women's choice to participate in the labour market

2002 – Pathways to the future strategy

- aimed to improve the quality of ECE by increasing the number of qualified teachers
- focused on growing participation by improving affordability – 20 Hours ECE introduced in 2007
- Equity Funding introduced in 2002 to remove barriers to participation faced by priority learners
- 2008 Regulations provided one set of standards for all licensed services.

2008 onwards – continued focus on growing participation

- Better Public Service target focused on increasing participation in ECE prior to school.

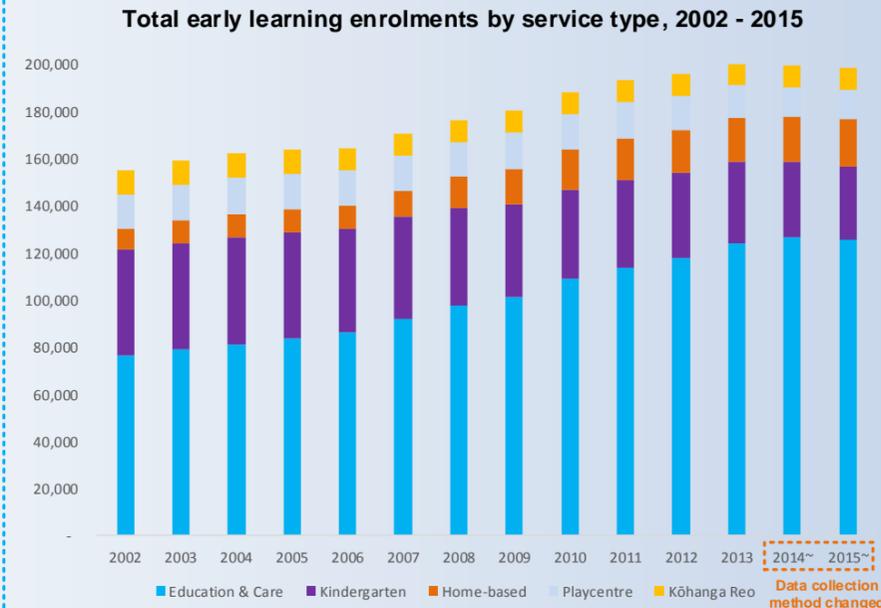
Key features of the current ECE system

- Strong focus on growing participation
- Diverse sector focused on parent choice
- Market model with limited state involvement
- Wide variation in curriculum implementation
- Based on input measures of quality, such as adult:child ratios and percentage of qualified teachers
- High trust model with limited monitoring and oversight

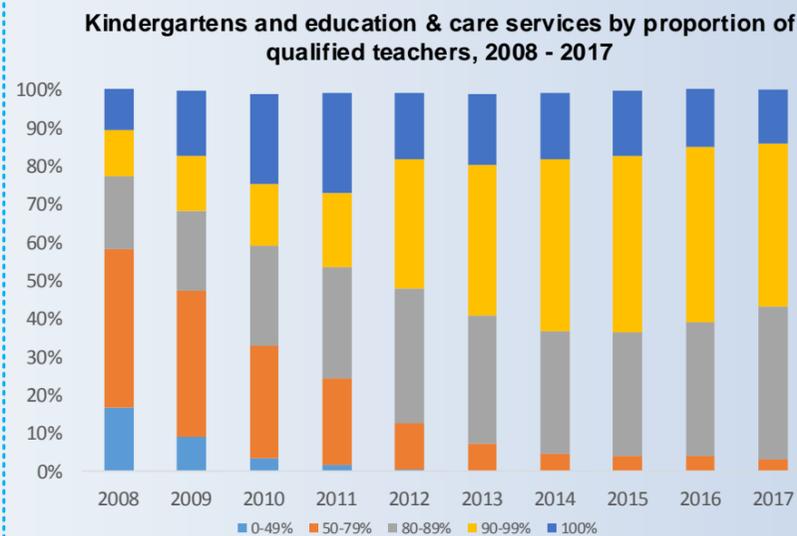
The ECE sector has responded to Government's signals

Sector composition has changed in response to parent demand

Total enrolments in education & care and home-based services have grown. Kindergartens, playcentre and kōhanga reo have experienced a decline.



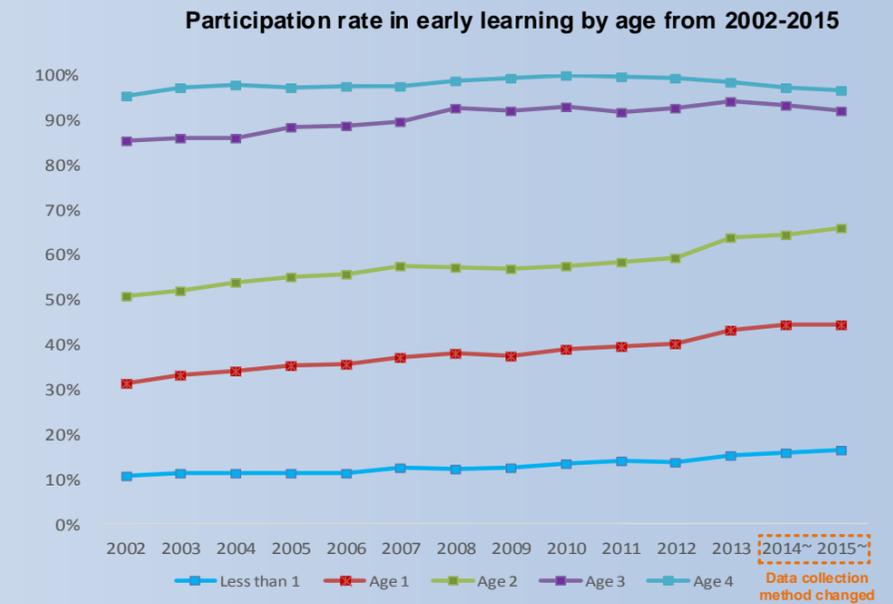
Strong growth in the certificated teaching workforce



In 2001 only 15% of early learning services had 80% or more qualified teachers. In 2017, over 97% meet this standard.

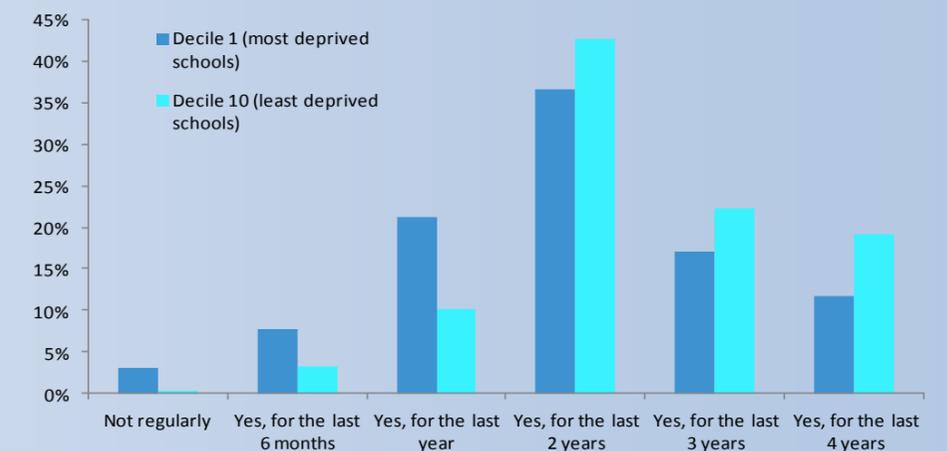
Participation in early learning has grown

Participation in early learning has increased across all ages. Participation of children under 3 is lower than for 3-4 years olds.



Disadvantaged children attend ECE for a shorter period of time before school

Attendance in ECE prior to school by time period & decile



Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to attend ECE for shorter periods of time before school.

Only 2% of ECE expenditure is currently targeted to support these services.

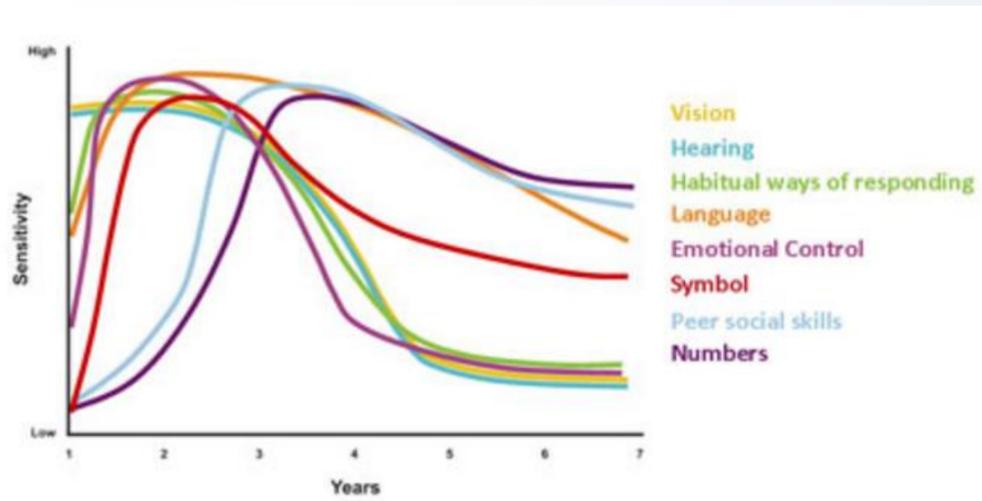
10 Year Strategic Plan for early learning – possible scope

We now have a greater understanding of the importance of early learning for children’s long-term development

The early years are critical to brain development

The early years of a child’s life establish critical foundations for later learning. The period between birth and 3 years old is a critical period for brain development, particularly language acquisition.

Areas of brain development by age and importance



We know which domains of child development are most crucial to positive long-term outcomes

- Self-control
- Inter-personal skills
- Language
- Emergent literacy
- Early numeracy

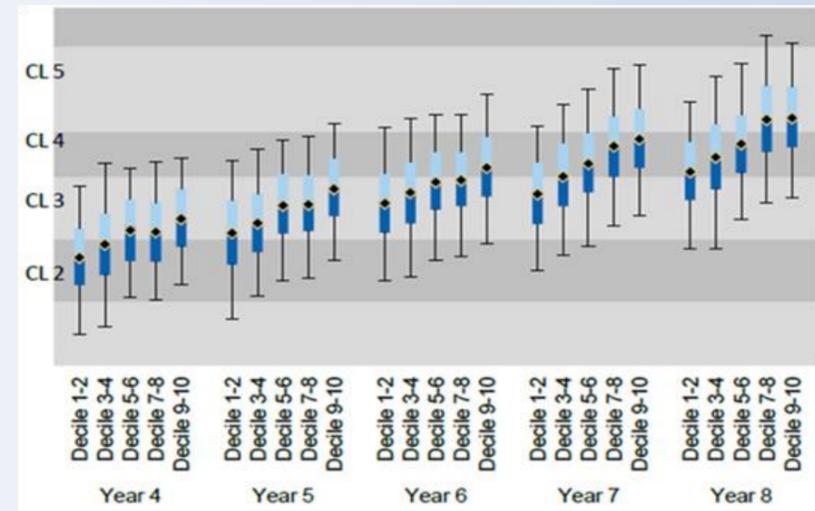
Based on survey data, ERO reports show wide variation in curriculum implementation and quality of teaching

- 44% of services did not have a curriculum that supports the development of infants’ and toddlers’ cognitive skills
- 31% of services had a ‘limited focus’ on oral language
- most services had a ‘limited ability’ to provide mathematics learning opportunities

Equity in early learning

The below chart shows that educational disparities emerge before children start school, and persist over time.

Performance in mathematics by decile and year



Role of Māori language in early learning

The early years are critical for language development. The Strategy could explore what role the early learning sector should play in supporting the Māori language.

Total enrolments in Māori immersion early learning services (2002 – 2015)



We seek your direction on the scope of the Strategy

Scoping questions

Should high quality early learning be a right for all children?

- If it were a right, what would this mean for the role of Govt?
- How active should Govt be in setting quality standards, such as curriculum delivery?
- Should some form of participation in early learning be compulsory?
- What level of participation do we want to achieve? At what age?

What is the role of the early learning sector in improving equitable outcomes?

- What is the best balance between targeted and universal funding?

How can we manage the trade-off between managing supply and parent choice?

- What role should Govt have in managing the supply/ network of early learning services?

What early learning costs should Govt / parents meet?

- What is the role of Govt in ensuring early learning is affordable? How affordable should it be?

Do we have the right balance between supporting labour market participation and outcomes for children?

- Should we distinguish between ‘education’ and purely ‘care’ arrangements?
- How can we balance the use of proxy measures of quality with more outcome-focused measures?

What is the role of Govt in supporting the ECE workforce?

10 Year Strategic Plan for early learning – proposed principles and process

Guiding principles for the Strategic Plan

- The Strategic Plan will provide a shared vision and road map for the future direction of New Zealand’s early learning system.
- The Strategic Plan aims to ensure all children can access high quality early learning that supports their identity, language and culture, and enables them to learn and thrive.

Key principle

The early learning system will...

Quality	Enable every child to experience high quality learning environments that contribute to positive educational and life course outcomes.	Diversity	Be responsive to the needs of all children and the cultural, language and educational aspirations of parents, family and whānau. Incorporates te ao Māori across early learning services.
Equity	Promote equitable outcomes for all children, appropriately meet the needs of those who require additional support, and ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed regardless of their background.	Collaboration	Ensure early learning is part of a joined up education system where children experience a seamless education pathway and education system planning includes the whole education pathway. Ensure early learning is connected to the broader social sector so children have access to a full range of support, where needed.
Te reo Māori	Actively support and protect te reo Māori and Māori medium pathways for learning.	Innovation	Support continuous improvement and innovation that provides evidence to inform improved outcomes for children.
Access	Ensure all children can access high quality early learning that supports positive outcomes and meets the workforce participation needs of their parents and whānau.	Accountability	Be underpinned by a transparent system that is accountable for providing children with positive learning experiences and the effective use of government funding.

Proposed process

We seek your direction on the general composition and role of the strategic advisory group

- We propose that you appoint a strategic plan advisory group with 10 to 12 members.
- This group could include sector experts and individuals with broader expertise related to the scope of the strategy.
- The Ministry would work with this group to co-construct a strategic plan that is consistent with an agreed set of principles.
- This group would seek input from relevant sector representative groups at key points in the process, such as ECAC and the ECE Policy Research Forum.

Proposed timeline for the development of the 10 Year Strategic Plan

