

Starting a home-based ECE service

This is a guide for service providers interested in establishing a licensed home-based education and care service.

Contents

[Administration records](#)

[Applying for network approval](#)

[Applying for a licence](#)

[Annual plan](#)

[Developing policies - Home-based services](#)

[Early childhood education and care regulations](#)

[Equipment](#)

[Fees and funding](#)

[Governance and management roles and responsibilities](#)

[Health and safety standards and emergencies](#)

[Home-based education and care premises and facilities](#)

[Home-based service operating models](#)

[How can providers meet the gain or reward requirement?](#)

[Managing your service](#)

[Philosophy statement](#)

[Recruitment of staff and educators for your home-based education and care service](#)

[The Early Learning Information \(ELI\) System](#)

[Roles and responsibilities in a home-based education and care service](#)

[The home-based education and care home environment](#)

[Suggested equipment for home-based ECE services](#)

[What is a home-based education and care service?](#)

Administration records

Using this resource

All businesses keep records of tax, finances, management decisions etc. The following list of administration records aims to help you to develop records required for:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008\(external link\)](#)

[Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and care services 2008](#)

[Health \(Infectious and Notifiable Diseases\) Regulations 1966\(external link\)](#)

Where possible, links are also made to the requirements of the ECE funding system. It is recommended that you read

the [Early Childhood Education Funding Handbook](#) as you develop your records, to ensure they comply with funding requirements.

The examples included in this resource can be downloaded as Word documents and changed as needed. The examples include mandatory requirements. Consider adding information or changing the layout, wording, titles and so on to suit your service.

Services are required to keep enrolment records and attendance records for 7 years ([licensing criteria GMA 9 and licensing criteria GMA 10](#)). It is a good idea to keep other records such as accidents, illness and excursions for Education Review Office audits.

Administration records – list

Please note the following:

The title of each record below is a guide only. The required content could be set out under different titles, or grouped differently

All content is required (unless otherwise stated)

The content that is required by the Early Childhood Education Funding Handbook only applies if you claim government funding.

If in any doubt about requirements, check the actual wording in the:

Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008.

Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services 2008.

Early Childhood Education Funding Handbook.

Health (Infectious and Notifiable Diseases) Regulations 1966 (infectious and notifiable disease regulations).

(See [regulation 14\(external link\)](#) and [schedule 2\(external link\)](#)).

ECE services must keep the following administrative records.

1. Enrolment form

The enrolment form is a written agreement between a parent or guardian and your service that a specific child will attend your service at specific times (or on a casual basis). The form must include at least the following:

Child's full name and their home address or addresses (GMA9).

Child's date of birth. You must sight a copy of the birth certificate of each new child permanently enrolled in your service so the Ministry of Education can allocate a national student number for each child.

Iwi affiliation if applicable.

Privacy statement.

The name and address (if the address differs from the child's) of at least one person who has custody of the child, or has been nominated by a person with custody of the child, and the place or means by which this person can be reached while the child attends the service (usually this would be a phone number) (GMA9).

Details of how at least one parent or guardian can be contacted while the child attends the service (GMA9).

The names of people who should be consulted if the child is ill or injured.

Emergency contact (GMA9).

Custody arrangements – including the names of people authorised to collect the child and, if there are legal issues, the names of those forbidden to have access or access is subject to conditions. Copies of appropriate court orders are useful to sight or keep (GMA9).

Details of the child's doctor or medical centre (GMA9).

Details of any chronic illness from which each child suffers, and of any medication the child has to take (GMA9).

Details of the child's immunisation status.

Date the child commenced attendance at the service and their finish date.

The days and times each child is expected to attend, and details of any later changes to the agreement. signed and dated by at least one parent/guardian (keep a paper copy).

For permanent enrolments, attestation by the child's parent/guardian of the hours the child is enrolled at another service (including none if appropriate).

For casual enrolments, attestation by the child's parent/guardian that the child is not enrolled at another service for the time the child will be attending the service casually, and an indication that the child will be attending on a casual basis, signed and dated by at least one of the child's parents/guardians.

An attestation declaration for '20 Hours ECE' funding must be completed and signed for each child receiving 20 Hours ECE funding. The attestation declaration must be attached to the enrolment agreement. Please note: 20 Hours ECE funding must not be claimed for a child until the service has received a completed and signed

Attestation Form. Refer to the **Early Childhood Education Funding Handbook, chapter 6** for more information.

If the service is offering 20 Hours ECE, details of Optional Charges.

Information on when the service is open and if the child will attend on statutory holidays or during school term breaks.

A signed declaration that indicates whether the educator who will be providing education and care for the child is a member of that child's family. This is required for funding purposes.

If the service transports children to and from the service, information about the transport arrangements.

A dated signature of at least one parent/guardian to attest to the accuracy of the enrolment record.

A dated declaration by the service provider to ensure the form has been checked and the relevant sections completed.

Note: It is crucial that you also refer to the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 ([regulation 47\(external link\)](#), [home-based licensing criterion GMA9](#)) and Early Childhood Education Funding Handbook, [chapters 6](#) and [11](#). The handbook includes important additional information about record keeping – for example, staffing records, ECE qualifications, and a section specifically relating to [home-based education and care networks \(3-B-4\)](#). The handbook also includes examples of records required for funding purposes in [appendix 2](#). An example enrolment form can be found in the Early Childhood Education Funding Handbook.

2. Fees record

Refer [Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, regulation 47\(external link\)](#), [Home-based licensing criterion GMA10](#) and [Early Childhood Education Funding Handbook, chapter 6](#)

This includes:

the level of fees and other charges to be paid and the conditions of payment (available to parents); and
the name of the child for whom fees and other charges are paid, the amount paid and the period of attendance

covered.

Publish the fees to be charged for attendance at the service (whether as actual fees, a range of fees, or a maximum fee) so that families are adequately informed.

Services are also required to provide written information letting parents know about the amount and details of the expenditure of any Ministry of Education funding received.

Providing written information to parents on the above requirements as outlined in criterion GMA2 could take a variety of forms including as part of a parent induction pack, newsletters, a website, a fees schedule or in annual reports.

Many services develop regular reporting processes including providing an annual report. Often monthly financial reports are made available. This is a good way to provide information to parents on a regular basis.

3. Attendance record, sign in and out book and roll

See [Early Childhood Education Funding Handbook](#), section 6-3

The attendance record shows **all** of the following:

Separate sections or columns for children aged under 2 and for children aged 2 and over.

The first and last name of each child, clearly identified.

Days and times of **actual** attendance for each child.

A record of any absence, with an 'a' when a child does not attend at a time for which they are enrolled.

Notes and explanations about attendance, such as when a child is away sick or has attended for more/less hours than they were enrolled.

Attendance registers that have been marked by staff on a twice daily basis (or once a day for services that operate only one session). Services **must** also keep evidence (for example, a signed attendance register) that a parent/guardian of each child has regularly examined and confirmed the attendance record. This needs to be completed once a week for home-based education and care services.

4. Accident, incident or illness record

This shows the following:

the child's name;

the date, time and description of the accident, incident or illness;

actions taken and by whom; and

evidence that parents have been notified/informed.

Refer to the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 ([regulation 46\(external link\)](#), [home-based licensing criterion HS22 and licensing criterion HS24](#)].

5. Medicine record

This should show the following:

Details of any medication a child has to take while attending the service.

Details of all medicine, (whether prescription or non-prescription) given to the children while at the service, the occasions on which it was administered, who administered it, and by whose authority. Parents need to acknowledge these details. Adults who administer medication need training or information relevant to the task. A record of this information or training needs to be kept. See **home-based licensing criterion HS26**.

Note: Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 ([regulation 46\(external link\)](#), [home-based licensing Criterion HS25](#)) requires that medicine is not given to a child unless it is given by a doctor or ambulance officer, by the parent of the child, or with the written authority of a parent / guardian.

6. Food record

A record of all food served to children while they are participating in the service (other than that provided by parents for their own children). This needs to record the type of food provided. The record must be kept and be available for inspection for 3 months after the food is served. Refer to the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 ([regulation 46\(external link\)](#), [home-based licensing Criterion HS16](#)).

7. Other documentation

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, regulation 47\(external link\)](#)
[home-based licensing criterion GMA1](#)

Services must ensure that parents are advised how to access the following:

The service's current licence certificate.

The full names and qualifications of each person counting towards regulated qualification requirements.

A procedure people should follow if they wish to complain about non-compliance with the regulations or criteria. This should include the option to contact the local Ministry of Education office and should provide the contact details.

A copy of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, and the Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services 2008.

A copy of the most recent Education Review Office report regarding the service.

Services must also:

document a hazard identification and management system that includes consideration of all hazards to children and to adults. See Home-based licensing criteria HS11; and

provide written information that lets parents know how they can be involved in the service and about any planned reviews and consultation.

Refer to [Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 regulation 47\(external link\)](#), [home-based licensing criterion GMA2](#).

It is recommended that services make their policies, management plans and meeting dates easily accessible

Applying for network approval

Applying for network approval

For information about how to apply for network approval and to access the application form, please visit this [webpage](#).

Applying for a licence

Probationary licence + application form

Read about how to apply for a licence for your home-based service below.

Planning

Before you start, do some research. Look through our information to find out everything from what our requirements are to how to choose your equipment and resources. Doing some research will help you make a plan and decide how to carry it out.

In particular, please note that From 1 February 2023, unless excluded, anyone intending to establish a new licensed early childhood service will first need to apply for and be granted network approval by the Minister of Education. You can find more information on [Network management for licensed early childhood services](#).

[Information for starting a home-based service\(external link\)](#)

You should also look at the Education Counts website to get an idea of how many and what types of early learning service are already in your area, to assess demand.

[Education Counts information about early learning services \(external link\)](#)

Talk to us

Once you have done your research, contact your local Ministry office to talk to us. We will also explain more details about the application process and answer any questions you may have.

Talking to us gives your application the best chance of being successful.

[Find your local Ministry office\(external link\)](#)

Application form and fee

You will need to complete the application form [EC1 - start a home-based service\[PDF, 309 KB\]](#)

There is a non-refundable **application fee** of \$2,817.50 (including GST).

Other documents

You will need to provide additional documents related to your service management, staffing, and curriculum.

You can access a copy of the Supervised Early Childhood Facilities – Playground Equipment and Surfacing Handbook from Standards NZ at www.standards.co.nz(external link)

Statutory declaration

You will need to declare that the information you have provided is true, and sign it in front of an authorised witness.

[More information about statutory declarations and authorised witnesses](#)(external link)

How to send us your form

You'll need to print the form. Scan and email or post your completed form (along with other required documents) to your [local Ministry office](#)(external link). You may like to keep a copy for your personal records.

If we need more information

If we need more information from you, we will contact you and ask you to provide it to us within 10 working days.

We will start assessing your application once we have received all the required information and payment of the application fee.

Visit to your proposed service

If you meet the requirements on the application form, we will contact you to make a time to visit some of your proposed homes. We will also visit your office so we can check any other relevant documents.

Before we visit, everything must be ready as if children are about to attend. For example, the education programme should be ready, furniture and equipment installed, and administrative systems in place.

Make sure the service provider contact person (and any other staff you want to be there) can be there when we visit.

During the visit, we will look at all aspects of your service, including:

- the homes
- the children's resources
- your teaching qualifications and ratio requirements
- health and safety considerations
- governance and management considerations.

We may take notes, photos, or other evidence to support our assessment.

For a full list of the areas we will check, and other documents you will need to provide, see the home-based EC3 assessment tool on our website.

[EC3 form: tool we use to assess services with regulatory requirements](#)

How long does it take?

We will do our best to make a decision about whether your application is successful within 30 working days of receiving it.

We need all information before we can start assessing your application.

If your application is successful

If your application is successful, we will email or post you a licence. The licence shows details about your service, such as the hours children may attend.

You must make your licence accessible to parents and caregivers.

Full licence

A full licence must be granted within 12 months of gaining a probationary licence. Please contact your local Ministry office when your service is ready to complete a full licence check. During the full licence check, the Ministry of Education will assess policies, practices and curriculum implementation in action.

Annual plan

An annual plan is an important part of the smooth operation of an ECE service. An annual plan is required to meet the [Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 regulation 47\(external link\)](#) and [licensing criterion GMA8](#).

What is an annual plan for?

An annual plan provides a method for tracking the progress of some of the key tasks your service needs to complete regularly, as well as specific 'one off' projects.

For some projects you will need to develop much more detailed time lines identifying 'who, what, when'.

Download an example annual plan

The example plan has been designed for you to use and change to suit the needs of your service. Alternatively, you could make your own.

An [annual plan \[DOC, 52 KB\]](#) allows you to easily tick items off as you go and check progress – for example, at monthly management meetings. You can ensure that tasks are spread over the year and in the right order.

Remember this is not an exhaustive plan and the headings may or may not suit your service; it is designed to give you some ideas only.

Developing policies - Home-based services

We suggest you do the following:

1. Read the licensing criteria booklet that applies to your service type to identify which policies are required.
2. Write drafts of documentation required for licensing and other policies, procedures and processes you think would be useful. If your service is part of an umbrella organisation it may require additional documentation or have

examples you can adapt.

3. Consider how you will ensure that your service operates in accordance with the regulations and licensing criteria, and have documentation to reflect this.
4. Download probationary licence application (EC/1C) form from [our website](#). It is helpful to have the form at this stage as some of your documentation of policies, procedures and processes need to be submitted as part of the application. The other policies, procedure and processes will be looked at later, on site, when your service is visited by the Ministry of Education as part of the licensing process.

[Contact your local Ministry of Education office](#)

Review of third-party material:

The Ministry does not, as a matter of policy, review material produced by organisations (i.e. third party) for use by early learning providers. It is the responsibility of the organisation producing the material for use in the early learning sector to ensure that it reflects the required practice standards. The Ministry will from time to time review this material in the course of its regulatory functions, e.g. licensing and reviews of early learning providers. If, as a result of reviewing material, we become aware of an inconsistency between the third-party material and expected practice, we will advise the provider and organisation producing the material of the inconsistency. It is the responsibility of the organisation producing the material to ensure it is updated to reflect the required practice standard.

- [Review of third-party material](#)

Why have policies?

Policies identify agreed processes and procedures to ensure:

key legislative requirements are met;
management, contracted and employed staff, and parents have a shared understanding of the home-based service's agreed processes and procedures; and
the home-based service delivery and professional practice is consistent, safe and appropriate.

What is required?

The [Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008\(external link\)](#) apply to all licensed services. The regulations require services to formulate certain policies, processes and procedures. Read the regulations and the [home-based licensing criteria](#) to clarify what is actually required and from there determine what policies you will need. An ECE service's policies will reflect its individual philosophy, values and style of operation. ECE services also need to develop their own policies and procedures to meet other legislative requirements.

Are policies legally binding?

Policies are not legally binding. They reflect an individual ECE services agreed practice, and can be reviewed and changed by the service. Staff, parents and others in the service are usually asked to agree to follow the services policy (and any future changes to policy) when they are employed, or contracted, or when their child is enrolled.

In this way they become binding to those staff and parents, and the service could dismiss an employee, terminate a contract, or cancel an enrolment if a policy is not followed. A court of law could not do the same because it only deals

with breaches of regulations or law.

Can we copy from other services?

Policies from other ECE services can give you good ideas to think about as you write your own. However, do remember that all services and communities have different structures, beliefs, values and expectations. It is important that your policies are considered and are relevant to your service. If you don't like a policy you already have, discuss it and change it.

Your policies should work for you!

Writing policies

Wherever possible, develop policies before you need them and be prepared to introduce new policies and procedures when the need for this arises. Consultation with staff and parents will help to ensure your policies and procedures are robust and realistic for implementation on a daily basis.

Most policies include:

- a rationale (a reason for having the policy)
- objectives (what you hope to achieve through the policy)
- procedures that clearly describe the actual practices that will occur
- how the policy will be implemented
- when the policy should be implemented
- who is responsible for its implementation
- when the policy is planned to be reviewed.

If your policy is not working well, consult with staff, contractors and families and change it! The content of your policies belongs to your service.

A regular review process (see [regulation 47\(external link\)](#), [criterion GMA3](#)) where those involved in the service have the opportunity to discuss policy and suggest changes will ensure your policies and procedures are always relevant to your service.

Policies

Personnel policy

To read upfront:

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, regulation 47\(external link\)](#)
[Licensing criteria for home-based ECE services GMA6.](#)

The [Employment New Zealand website\(external link\)](#) has information to support human resource management that service providers may find useful. This includes templates for letters to appoint staff, fact sheets, employment agreement guides and help calculating parental leave for your employed staff. There is also an 'ask a question' feature.

[The Education Council\(external link\)](#) provides information about the process of teacher registration.

The [Human Rights Commission\(external link\)](#) provides information about equal opportunities, including a discrimination and complaints guide.

The [New Zealand Educational Institute\(external link\)](#) is a union that negotiates collective employment agreements on behalf of many early childhood teachers.

The [New Zealand Home-Based Early Childhood Education Association\(external link\)](#) provides information of current news and events relating to home-based education as well as tax, ACC and insurance obligations. Members have access to a tax calculator, newsletters and a discussion forum among other things.

[Inland Revenue\(external link\)](#) is a good starting point for finding out about obligations and entitlements concerning tax.

The [Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand\(external link\)](#) and the [Early Childhood Council\(external link\)](#) provide members with information and advice on industrial issues, including management handbooks and other resources. Although more specifically directed towards centre-based early childhood education and care services, home-based service providers may find them useful.

Settling and transition policy

Transitioning to, within and from early childhood education settings are significant processes for children and their families. To make these experiences positive and successful, it is important that policy and procedures are based on knowledge of children and current educational theory and practice. These resources and further reading may assist with development of the policy and practice.

[Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa \(1996\)\(external link\)](#) – early childhood education curriculum (especially strands one and 2).

[Kei Tua o te Pae](#): assessment for learning – early childhood education exemplars.

Health and safety policy

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 regulation 46\(external link\)](#)
[Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services 2008.](#)

The Ministry of Health's website has a resource called [Ngā Kupu Oranga: Healthy Messages\(external link\)](#). It is a health and safety resource for early childhood education services and is available to download.

Your local [Health Protection Officer \(HPO\)\(external link\)](#) will be able to give you useful information that compliments Ngā Kupu Oranga.

The Ministry of Civil Defence website has a resource called [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) Services Emergency Planning Guidance\(external link\)](#).

The [Worksafe website\(external link\)](#) has a range of resources, including tools like self-assessment sheets for health and safety matters and forms you can use, through to information about managing hazards for small businesses.

Legislation can be accessed on the [New Zealand Legislation website\(external link\)](#).

Curriculum assessment and planning policy

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, regulation 43\(external link\)](#)

[Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services C1 – 13](#)

[Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa \(1996\) – early childhood education curriculum\(external link\)](#)

[Kei Tua o te Pae: Assessment for Learning – early childhood education exemplars](#)

Child protection policy

[Regulation 46\(1\)\(a\) of the Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008\(external link\)](#) requires that services take all reasonable steps to promote the good health and safety of children enrolled in the service. [The Children's Act 2014\(external link\)](#) and the licensing criterion HS28 also require all home-based services to have a child protection policy.

Read more about these requirements and the Ministry's accompanying guidance in the [home-based licensing criteria and guidance](#).

Communication policy

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 regulation 47\(external link\)](#) and the Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services, GMA1 to GMA3, set out the minimum standard of communication which should be communicated to parents and how they can access information about their child.

Positive guidance policy

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, regulation 43, criterion C1\(external link\)](#)

The [Providing Positive Guidance\(external link\)](#) publication is also useful.

Complaints policy

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, regulation 47\(external link\)](#) and the [Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services, criterion GMA1](#), require services to inform parents of the procedure to follow if they wish to complain about non-compliance with the regulations or criteria.

You can find information about the complaints process for parents and whānau on our [Parents website\(external link\)](#).

Fees policy

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, regulation 47\(external link\)](#)

[Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services, criterion GMA 2](#)

Early childhood education and care regulations

Licensed home-based education and care services are required to comply with the legislative and regulatory standards and criteria set out in the:

[Education and Training Act 2020\(external link\)](#)

[Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008\(external link\)](#)

[Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services 2008](#)

A licensed home-based service is eligible to receive government funding, and must comply with the Ministry of Education funding rules in order to do so.

The quality of the education and care provided by the service is also reviewed regularly by the [Education Review Office\(external link\)](#).

Service providers can talk to their local Ministry of Education staff to request the licensing assessment tool for home-based ECE services or find out more about ECE regulations and criteria.

Equipment

One of the advantages of home-based education and care learning environments is that there is already a huge range of valuable learning tools, resources and opportunities available in each home and in the communities around them, for example baking, cooking, gardening, local parks, playgroups and library story times.

These provide some of the resources for the provision of care and education for children enrolled in your service.

It is important to note that the educators in your service are your main resource and the key to a successful service is the relationships that are fostered between the coordinators, educators, and children and families involved. No amount of 'equipment' can substitute this.

Home-based education and care organisations often provide equipment that educators can access to complement their environments.

The following points can be used by both service providers and educators to think about the equipment, resources and opportunities that will support and extend children's learning in home-based settings.

1. Consider what equipment and resources will meet the curriculum standards in the regulations, and will:
 - reflect personal philosophies and the philosophy of the service
 - actively engage the children who are attending
 - acknowledge and reflect the local community
 - acknowledge and reflect the dual heritage of New Zealand.

It is important to remember that the home and the local community contain a variety of equipment and resources that can readily be used by children to support all aspects of learning. It may be useful to visit other home-based ECE services to view the variety and choices of equipment they are providing and discuss their reasons for choosing that equipment.

2. Make a list of equipment that you consider you may need in your service to help educators extend on the resources they have in their home. Many suppliers have catalogues and price lists available. Remember that each home already has a lot of resources available without having to purchase too much. Remember also that the opportunity to go 'out and about' in the community and utilise community resources is an asset for home-based contexts.
3. Ensure that all equipment complies with health and safety standards outlined in the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 and the Licensing Criteria for Home-Based Education and Care Services 2008.
4. Services must be 'ready for children' before the Ministry of Education will undertake a licensing visit. For home-based services this means that there are home-based educators 'ready' to have children in their homes and their homes have been checked by the service coordinators to ensure they comply with the home-based criteria and are 'ready for children'. Home-based services also need to ensure that management and coordinator premises and resources (for example, equipment to borrow) are ready to support educators to provide for children.

(See the [Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008\(external link\)](#) and the [Licensing Criteria for Home-Based Education and Care Services 2008.](#))

Fees and funding

[20 Hours ECE](#) affects the way a service receives funding for 3, 4 and 5 year olds and the fees that can be charged for some children.

You cannot charge an extra fee for an enrolled child who is receiving 20 Hours ECE. Fees can be charged for additional hours of enrolment outside of 20 Hours ECE.

Usual enrolment fees or waiting list fees can be charged for children who will be using 20 Hours ECE at your ECE service. These fees must apply to all children, not just those receiving 20 Hours ECE. You must also ensure that these fees do not prevent children from accessing 20 Hours ECE.

Parents can be asked to pay optional charges for hours claimed as 20 Hours ECE. Donations may also be requested.

There are different kinds of early childhood administration software available to assist with the management of fees, subsidies, etc. These can be purchased from individual private companies.

Governance and management roles and responsibilities

Management group

If a management group has been elected, the members need to be people with an interest in the service, who will be able to attend meetings regularly, assist with decision making and help manage the service. The management group is

formed at the annual general meeting and includes:

a representative from the teaching team who has the most responsibility for the day-to-day running of the service – usually the person responsible (electing a teacher to the management group is not advisable because of the conflict of interest – see appendix one)

the contact person/licensee

parents/whānau and community representatives who are elected at the annual general meeting.

Depending on the size of your service, your management group will have between 5 and 8 members.

Governing group or board

A governing board may be elected from:

parents and whānau

the community

stakeholders

secretary

treasurer

and includes the contact person.

The size of your governing board is set out in your constitution or trust deed. The size that works best is between 5 and 8 people.

Secretary

The secretary takes minutes at meetings, deals with correspondence, keeps files and ensures the roll is kept up to date.

Treasurer

The treasurer needs to be familiar with the Ministry of Education funding details.

The treasurer ensures that the financial records are kept up to date and accurate and manages income and banking, makes payments, keeps the cash book up to date, reconciles bank statements, and issues receipts. The treasurer will be responsible for balancing the cash book and bank reconciliations. The treasurer organises the financial records to be audited.

Responsibilities of governing

What is governing?

Governing is the responsibility for the long-term health and prosperity of the service. It includes:

designing and putting into words a vision of what your service will be like in the future

making sure your service will provide high quality early childhood education for children in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years and beyond

managing long-term projects or issues rather than day-to-day matters.

A job description for governing

When you govern, you need to be always asking yourself: “Is what I am doing going to make the service better in the future?”

The job of governing includes:

- setting the direction for the service
- setting performance targets
- developing and following through on policies
- making sure the service has the capacity by way of staff, equipment and money to do all the things you would like it to do
- exercising control by measuring performance against the targets you have set
- understanding what risks the service might incur and having a plan to minimise them
- regular reporting

In your governing meetings, you must ensure that you:

- exercise a ‘duty of care’ (this is defined as “the standard of care which an ordinary man might expect to take on his own behalf”)
- act honestly
- do not use your position for advantage (your responsibility is to the service and you must not try and gain a personal benefit)
- comply with legislation
- comply with the Ministry of Education’s requirements
- act in the best interests of the service at all times.

What are you responsible for when you govern?

Governing includes such things as:

- making sure the service provides quality education for the children so that families will choose your service
- making sure your service meets the needs of families, both now and in the future, the community, staff, the Ministry, the Education Review Office and other interested parties
- meeting all your responsibilities on time and at all times
- defining the purpose, values/beliefs and aims of the service
- developing written policies and procedures
- preparing and reviewing the statement of philosophy
- reviewing progress and responsibilities as described in the long-term plan
- ensuring your service keeps families and the community informed and involved.

Term of office

Usually the members of the governance group will be elected at the annual general meeting but in some services

established by an umbrella organisation they may be appointed.

Good practice is to elect each member of the governing group for a term of 2 years with a right to be elected for another term of 2 years. It is usual to elect half the number of the group one year and another half the following year. This provides continuity from one year to the next in the long-term planning done by the governing group.

Who should attend governing meetings?

Governing meetings are for those elected or appointed to provide governance. Parents/whānau or other interested people who may attend do not automatically have speaking rights and are not entitled to vote.

Stakeholders

Those elected to govern are responsible back to the parents/whānau and also to others who have an interest in the success of the service – the stakeholders.

For most services, the following is a sample list of stakeholders:

Parents/whānau
The community which the service operates within
Ministry of Education
Education Review Office
Staff and contractors
Children
Suppliers to the service
Neighbours
Owners of the homes from which the service operates
Child, Youth and Family Services
Inland Revenue Department
Other government agencies
Local/district/regional authority
Funders and sponsors
The church or other 'umbrella' group

It is important for the governing group to review its list of stakeholders each year to make sure it is up to date. The governing group should agree which stakeholders are the most important.

Meeting with stakeholders

The governing group should meet with stakeholders each year. The meeting might only take 20 to 30 minutes but can provide valuable information for the governing group about the future of the service.

The governing group might plan to meet with one of the important stakeholder groups every second or third governing meeting. The stakeholder should be provided with the long-term plan prior to the meeting.

Communication with stakeholders

Good quality and frequent communication with stakeholders helps to keep everyone involved and up to date.

Some stakeholders need frequent communication, some not so often.

Health and safety standards and emergencies

[Regulation 46 of the Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008^{external link}](#) outlines the health and safety requirements with which all early childhood education service providers, including home-based service providers must comply. These requirements relate to:

- promoting the good health and safety of the children enrolled in the service,
- preventing accidents and the spread of infection,
- keeping the premises, facilities and equipment used on those premises in good repair, maintained regularly, and safe and free from hazards, and
- procedures to deal with fire, earthquakes and other emergencies.

See the section on writing policies for help with developing policies and procedures related to health and safety.

For all premises used for the provision of home-based education and care, service providers must ensure that there are documented procedures for:

- the hygienic laundering of linen used by the children or adults
- the changing (and disposal if appropriate) of nappies
- dealing with emergencies – the procedure must be consistent with national or regional Civil Defence guidelines
- evacuation of the premises
- monitoring children's sleep
- identifying and managing hazards
- responding to suspected child abuse and having a process for the prevention of child abuse – documents must be consistent with Child, Youth and Family or New Zealand Police guidelines.

In addition, educators must also keep:

- records of emergency drills carried out with children
- records of excursions
- evidence of parental permission for any travel by motor vehicle
- records of all food served to children while they are participating in the service (other than that provided by parents for their own children)
- records of all injuries, incidents and serious illnesses that occur, and the records of written authority from parents for the administration of medicine and records of all medicine given to children left in the care of the service
- records of training and/or information provided to adults who administer medicine to children.

Refer to the [Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services 2008](#) for more detailed information regarding these requirements.

Although the service provider is responsible for ensuring that these health and safety standards are complied with, it is likely to be the coordinator who works alongside the educator to develop effective and appropriate procedures, systems and practices.

Civil Defence has a range of checklists and pamphlets; information in the checklists and pamphlets can be used to ensure that procedures are relevant to the threats in the local area including an emergency planning guide called [Early Childhood Education Services Emergency Planning Guidance.\(external link\)](#)

Educators will need to ensure they have enough supplies and a civil defence procedure outlining how they will access appropriate help and support in emergencies. Parents and families will need to be told where the local Civil Defence centre is in case there is a need to evacuate the educator's home.

The following are useful resources to support coordinators and educators to comply with the health and safety standard in the 2008 regulations.

Resources

The Ministry of Health's [Ngā Kupu Oranga Healthy Messages\(external link\)](#) is a useful health and safety resource.

The [New Zealand Fire Service website\(external link\)](#) has information to support the development of emergency procedures.

Contact your local council for emergency planning information that relates specifically to the area in which your service is located.

Home-based education and care premises and facilities

The list below details a range of issues to consider when setting up premises for the provision of home-based education and care. Service providers are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the regulations are being complied with in respect of each home used in connection with the service.

It can be used by service providers, coordinators and educators to ensure that the premises being used for home-based education and care provision meet the requirements of [regulation 45 \(Premises and facilities standard: general\)\(external link\)](#) in the regulations.

Health and safety issues

Do buildings contain hazards such as lead-based paint and asbestos?

Do premises contain potential hazards – for example, leachate, long-life spray, chemical storage or poisonous plants?

Is there adequate lighting and ventilation?

Are the indoor areas of the premises able to maintain a temperature of not less than 16°C?

Are heating fittings safeguarded to prevent harm to children?

Is there adequate means to escape from a fire? How would you deal with an earthquake?

Are the premises safe and clean?

Is equipment able to be stored safely?

Are stairs, windows, balconies and exits kept safe? Are stairs, steps and ramps safeguarded or safely gated?

Are exposed flames, electrical power sockets, stoves or cooking hobs safeguarded/shielded or out of children's reach?
Are electrical jugs, kettles, irons, and their cords inaccessible to children?
Do you have a first aid kit that is equipped to an approved standard and is inaccessible to children?
Are structures holding water (such as swimming pools) secured against entry by children?

(Refer to the [Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987\(external link\)](#)).

Indoor space

Is an area available for the restful sleep of children?
Are there toilet and hygienic hand washing and drying facilities?
Is there an area for safe and hygienic nappy changing?
Is there a plumbing fixture (for example, shower, bath) for washing sick or soiled children?
Are there facilities (such as in a kitchen) for hygienic preparation, storage and/or serving of food and drink (as detailed in **home-based ECE services criterion PF13**)?
Is there a safe and hygienic space for children to sit when eating?
Are there safe and comfortable spaces (indoors and outdoors) for crawling, walking and floor play for any infants, toddlers, or children not walking?
Are children able to be seen easily when they are outdoors?
Is there at least 10 square metres of indoor play space in one space?
Is it possible to provide a range of educational activities?
Are there spaces for quiet activities?
Are there spaces for physically active play?
Are there safe storage spaces for children's play equipment, personal belongings, cleaning materials and administrative records?
Is there an area for art preparation and clean up?

The outdoor area

Is the outdoor area easily accessible and available to children? Is there a smooth indoor-outdoor flow?
Does the outdoor area have good drainage in all weathers?
Is the area suitably surfaced?
Are there large open areas?
Are fences and gates able to be secured?
Is there shade from the sun?
Are there areas available that include natural materials?
Are children easily visible?
Are there spaces for physically active play?
Are there any sheds or garages that may store hazards and are these able to be made inaccessible?

[Regulation 45 \(Premises and Facilities\)\(external link\)](#) and [regulation 46 \(Health and Safety\)\(external link\)](#) of the licensing criteria provide more details on these requirements.

Home-based service operating models

There are predominantly 2 different models of home-based education and care services operating in New Zealand:

- A service provider employs or engages an educator as a contractor directly and then places them with a family or families.
- A service provider brokers the relationship between educators and families. The families then employ or contract the educator directly.

Irrespective of the model used, service providers as the licence holders remain directly responsible for delivering education and care services in homes, in accordance with the regulations and licensing criteria.

How can providers meet the gain or reward requirement?

Home-based education and care differs from other early childhood education (ECE) options because children remain in a home environment. A home-based educator provides full or part day education and care for fewer than 5 children under the age of 6, in private homes. Educators are supervised by coordinators who are qualified and registered early childhood education teachers.

For a home-based service to receive Ministry funding there must be an auditable trail of reciprocity. This means that the Ministry must be able to see that the educator providing ECE has been paid for providing this to the children in their care.

The business arrangement between the service provider and the educator needs to have evidence of a contractual agreement and other related business documentation, for example a record of salary payments and other methods of payment.

Providing a quantifiable benefit to educators, that is some form of payment that directly benefits the educator and that relates to the amount of work they do, is required to meet the provision for gain or reward.

It is the responsibility of home-based service providers to ensure that all educators within their service/s receive payment for their work. Payment can either come from the service provider, or from the family the educator is working with.

While the Ministry cannot specify what this means in terms of the amount or type of payment, there needs to be a clear link between the payment received and the work completed. Services will be responsible for complying with the requirements of employment related legislation such as the [Commerce Act 1986\(external link\)](#) and the [Income Tax Act 2007\(external link\)](#).

Managing your service

Managing is doing the day-to-day things at the service in order to fulfil your long-term goals. For example, if you are buying some new books for the children at your service, you are helping to manage their learning needs.

Managing includes such things as:

- making sure the regulations are met on a daily basis
- preparing budgets and financial accounts

- implementing the goals and policies
- buying and looking after resources
- making sure families and the community are up to date with what is happening with the service.

When you are managing, it is important to make sure you hear and respond to the views and concerns of the coordinator and the educators. The management group should not take over or interfere with the educators' responsibilities.

Every service is different. In some big services there can be separate governance and management group. In smaller services there is often one group that is responsible for both governing and managing.

The governance group is responsible for developing and reviewing the service's policies. The management group will be responsible for developing and implementing procedures that bring the policies to life. It is important that the management group knows that it is its responsibility to ensure the efficient administration of the service, accurate financial accountability, and the funding received is used towards achieving the goals of the service.

Philosophy statement

The statement of philosophy tells everyone who works or comes into your premises what is special about your service and what you want to achieve.

The [Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008 \(external link\)](#) require you to develop and display a statement of philosophy. It needs to be easy to understand by everyone involved in your service and clearly displayed.

What would you put in a statement of philosophy?

Every statement of philosophy will be different but you might want to include:

why you set up the service
what you want to achieve day by day
what values are really important for your service and community.

Here are some examples:

"Our educators will be well trained and have regular professional development."

"At our service the values of our culture are taught."

"Parents will be encouraged and given opportunities to share in the life of the service."

Who is responsible for the statement of philosophy?

Everyone involved at the service should have the opportunity to contribute to preparing and reviewing the statement, including:

parents/whānau
educators
coordinators
the service provider.

Preparing or reviewing the statement of philosophy

The management group or governing board is responsible for writing a draft statement of philosophy. This should be circulated to as many stakeholders as possible to get their opinion. This can be done through a meeting or by doing a survey; whatever method is best for your stakeholders.

Their ideas and comments should be included in the final statement before it is circulated again. It may be necessary to go back to each of the groups to make sure that everyone is happy with the final statement of philosophy. Statements of philosophy do not have to be long but they do need to be clear about why the service exists and what it stands for.

The statement of philosophy should be reviewed each year and the annual general meeting is a good time to do this. It's a good idea to give a copy to those involved a week or 2 before the meeting so they can think about whether changes are needed.

Giving a 'close-off' date for suggested changes keeps the review on track and means the refreshed statement can be presented at the annual general meeting.

Recruitment of staff and educators for your home-based education and care service

Home-based service providers need to recruit coordinators and educators that fully understand the responsibilities that are associated with providing education and care to children in (separate) homes.

The [Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008\(external link\)](#) and the Early Childhood Funding rules allow for a licensed maximum number of 80 child places but many service providers choose to operate with fewer children attending. When deciding on the number of coordinators and educators required, service providers will take into account meeting regulatory requirements, workload and hours of coordinators to cover when children attend, their philosophical beliefs, perceptions of quality, and views about how quality home-based education and care can be ensured.

1. Prepare for recruitment and management of staff

Policies and procedures for human resource management are required as part of the licensing process. Check the [Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008, regulation 47\(external link\)](#), and the [home-based criterion GMA 6](#) for what is required.

Home-based service providers are required to provide induction procedures for all new staff and professional development opportunities for all staff employed or contractors engaged in the service. Professional development can be provided in-house, through external providers, or by supporting staff to gain recognised qualifications (educators) or upgrade qualifications (coordinators).

2. Clarify the positions you need to fill and the responsibilities and tasks associated with each position

Write a job description for each position, for example educator, coordinator, administration staff, manager. Well written job descriptions that clearly explain what is required and expected of individuals assist the service provider to engage

the right person for the job.

See the section on job descriptions for more information.

3. Write employment agreements or contracts for all staff

All employed staff must have written employment agreements. It can be either an individual agreement or a collective agreement.

The following websites have information about collective employment agreements:

[New Zealand Educational Institute\(external link\)](#)

[Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand\(external link\)](#)

[Early Childhood Council\(external link\)](#)

[Te Puni Kōkiri\(external link\)](#)

Home-based educators who are self-employed contractors must comply with legislation required of a self-employed contractor. This includes liability for tax with Inland Revenue Department (IRD) and payment of Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) levies.

As self-employed contractors or independent contractors, home-based educators will have an agreement that takes the form of a contract between themselves and the service provider, or between themselves and the families. The contract will vary depending on the model under which the service is operating. Contracts need to clearly state the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the parents, educators and service/company involved. The contract should also state who pays the educator and how they are to be paid.

The [Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment\(external link\)](#) provides information about the rules governing employment relationships in New Zealand under the [Employment Relations Act 2000\(external link\)](#). It covers the relationship from the start, through to how it is formalised in an employment agreement, to how it can end.

4. Advertise for personnel

Advertisements in the [Education Gazette\(external link\)](#) and local newspapers can be used to provide you with ideas on how to design your advertisements for coordinators and/or educators. Websites are also a useful way to promote your service, as is 'word of mouth' within your community.

The [How to hire guide for employers\(external link\)](#) by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment provides information about good practice when recruiting and hiring employees.

5. Interview and select personnel

The positions of both coordinator and educator involve high levels of trust and responsibility. It is therefore essential for the welfare of the children attending the service that care is taken in the selection of high calibre personnel to fulfil these positions.

Under the [Children's Act 2014\(external link\)](#), all home-based educators are defined as core-workers. As such they are subject to safety checking requirements that include:

a standard safety check, and
a workforce restriction.

Safety checking is a multi-stage process that includes:

verification of identity

an interview

information about work history

referee information

information from any relevant professional organisation or registration body

a Police vet

a risk assessment.

More information on these requirements can be found on the [Child protection](#) page.

Educators are a key resource in a home-based education and care service. You may look for the following in potential educators:

Do they enjoy children?

Do they have good relationship skills?

Are they respectful of diversity?

Do they interact with children in a positive manner? Are they 'in tune' with children?

Do they have good communication skills?

Are they reliable, honest and trustworthy?

Are they a good role model?

Do they have plenty of energy, sense of humour, positive attitude to learning, creative thinking?

Does their home meet all standards of health and safety, as well as having the ability to provide for all legislative requirements?

Are all members of their family comfortable with opening their house and privacy to other people?

Do they hold a first aid certificate? Are they willing to gain this qualification?

The responsibilities and tasks identified in the job description can be used as a guide for assessing the capability of the potential coordinator/educator.

Service providers and educators are required, under [section 56 of the Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008\(external link\)](#), to ensure that children do not come into contact with people who have physically ill-treated or abused or committed a crime against children.

The Education and Training Act 2020 includes a requirement that all usually resident members 17 years of age or older in the home where the home-based service is being provided will be Police vetted. This applies where the children attending the service are being cared for in a home other than their own. The Act also requires that Police vetting is completed before any unsupervised provision of care and education commences.

It can take some weeks before the results of a Police vet are available and service providers would need to take this delay into consideration when arranging start dates for new staff.

Help with employment issues

The [Employment NZ website\(external link\)](#) has information to support human resource management. This includes templates for letters to appoint staff, fact sheets, employment agreement guides and help calculating parental leave for your employed staff. There is also an 'Ask a question' feature.

[Inland Revenue\(external link\)](#) is a good starting point for finding out about obligations and entitlements concerning tax.

The Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand website provides information about [the process of teacher certification\(external link\)](#).

The [Human Rights Commission\(external link\)](#) website provides information about equal opportunities, including a discrimination and complaints guide.

The [New Zealand Home-Based Early Childhood Education Association\(external link\)](#) provides information of current news and events relating to home-based education as well as tax, ACC and insurance obligations. Members have access to a tax calculator, newsletters and a discussion forum among other things.

The [New Zealand Educational Institute \(NZEI\)\(external link\)](#) is a union that negotiates collective employment agreements on behalf of many early childhood teachers.

Job/role descriptions

Home-based service providers are required to provide any staff employed, contractors or any other persons engaged in the service with suitable information and support to enable them to do their jobs. In the home-based context, a service provider will need to develop job/role descriptions for both coordinators and educators.

While the main focus of the roles of both coordinators and educators is the care and education of young children, there are differences in the responsibilities and tasks associated with these roles:

Coordinators have the responsibility for overseeing the education, care, comfort, health and safety of the children attending the service and providing professional leadership and support to educators within the service.

Educators have the responsibility for providing education, care and comfort directly to the children in his or her care, and attend to the health and safety of those children.

Job/role descriptions clearly identify the responsibilities and tasks related to a specific job/role. The nature of the employment/contractual relationship between the service provider and the educator may influence the nature of the job/role description. It is important that all parties clearly understand their own duties and their expectations of each other.

A staffing and appointments policy, and the process adhered to, should document the process for developing and changing a job/role description.

We suggest you do the following:

Read the home-based licensing criteria and the section on writing policies to identify which policies are required. Write drafts of documentation required for licensing and other policies, procedures and processes you think would be useful. If your service is part of an umbrella organisation, it may require additional documentation or have examples you can adapt.

Consider how you will ensure that your service operates in accordance with the regulations and licensing criteria, and that documentation reflects this.

Contact your local Ministry of Education office to have the 'Licensing a new home-based service' pack sent to you. This includes the EC/1Hm form to apply for your probationary licence.

See [Home-based licensing criteria](#)

See [Local Ministry of Education offices](#)

It is helpful to have the form at this stage as some of your documentation of policies, procedures and processes need to be submitted as part of the application.

The other policies, procedure and processes will be looked at later, on site, when your service is visited by the Ministry of Education as part of the licensing process.

Send all documentation required for licensing (policies, procedures, processes and administration records) to your local Ministry office with your probationary licence application EC/1Hm. Check with your Ministry official about how much lead in time they will require for receiving these records. It is likely that they will need to be sent at least one month before you want to begin operating.

After receiving your probationary licence application, your local Ministry office will contact you to make an appointment for your licensing visit. When satisfied that a licence application is fully complete and the service provider is fit and proper to hold a licence, a licence assessment visit to at least 2 homes (unless there is only one home in the service) to assess the home-based ECE service's compliance with the 2008 regulatory framework must be carried out.

The Early Learning Information (ELI) System

The Ministry of Education's [Early Learning Information \(ELI\)\(external link\)](#) System collects and stores information on enrolment and attendance in early childhood education (ECE) for approximately 180,000 children throughout Aotearoa.

The ELI System improves the ability of the Ministry and the ECE sector to exchange information electronically and will enhance the quality of information on participation in ECE.

The Ministry uses ELI System information for educational monitoring, reporting and research, and the development of new initiatives.

ELI Information Requirements: Licensed ECE services, unless specifically exempt, need to return specific information through the ELI System.

Roles and responsibilities in a home-based education and care service

The [Education \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2008\(external link\)](#) define four distinct positions of responsibility in a home-based education and a care service: Service Provider, Contact Person, Coordinator and Educator.

Service provider is a body, agency, or person that arranges, or offers to arrange education and care for children.

- The service provider is the holder of the licence. It is directly responsible for delivering education and care services in homes, in accordance with the regulations and licensing criteria.
- An application for a licence made on behalf of a service provider must be made by a fit and proper person to be involved in the management of the service as described in the regulations

The **contact person** is a person nominated by the service provider to represent its management, and this person's name is displayed on the Certificate of Licence. The service provider is legally responsible for meeting regulatory requirements, not the contact person. However the contact person must:

- be able to respond to the Ministry of Education as soon as practicable on any issue relating to licensing;
- have authority to act on behalf of the service provider; and
- reside locally.

A person will generally be considered to 'reside locally' if they live within the geographical boundaries serviced by the local Ministry of Education office. Contact your local Ministry of Education office if you are unsure whether the contact person would meet this requirement.

Coordinator means the person who has primary responsibility for overseeing the education and care, comfort, health and safety of the children, and providing professional leadership and support to educators within the service.

A coordinator:

- is the person recognised as the 'person responsible' in a licensed home-based service
- must hold an early childhood education teaching qualification recognised by the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand for registration purposes, and must hold a current practising certificate.
- is responsible for:
 - supervising children, and the adults providing education and care, at all times children attend a service
 - contacting each educator at least once a fortnight
 - visiting each educator at least once a month
 - taking all reasonable steps each month to observe each child while that child is receiving education and care, including monitoring individual learning plans
 - providing professional leadership and support to educators, including providing advice and training
 - ensuring there is adequate equipment (and where necessary providing this)
 - supporting educators and families
 - ensuring all homes and educators meet regulations and criteria.

Read more about the role of the coordinator in [Further Home Based Regulatory Guidance](#).

Educator means the person who provides education, care and comfort directly to children in his or her care, and attends to the health and safety of those children. An educator:

- must be aged 17 years or over
- [must hold a first aid qualification](#) (you can read more about this in the [guidance for HS22](#)).

It is vital that care is taken during the selection process to assess the suitability of each potential educator. Working as a home-based educator will not suit everybody. A high level of individual responsibility and trust is required of an educator and, as the provision of the service often occurs in the home of the educator, there must be a willingness on the educator's part to open their home to others. It is important that other family members are also comfortable with this happening.

The service provider and coordinator are responsible for matching educators and families and for ensuring that educators' practices promote the education, health and safety of children enrolled in the service. As the responsible body, service providers must ensure that educators are provided with adequate equipment and resources, support,

advice and training in early childhood education.

All licensed home-based education and care service providers must ensure that any person who has physically ill-treated or abused or committed a crime against children is excluded from coming into contact with children in the care of an educator.

Service providers must ensure worker safety checking has been completed in line with the Children's Act 2014.

[Read about safety checking.](#)

Please note the [Education and Training Act 2020\(external link\)](#) also requires adults aged 17 years or over who live in the home to be Police vetted as well. The Police vet must be obtained even if the person is unlikely to be present when the licensed home-based education and care service is provided.

[Read about Police vetting for early learning services.](#)

The home-based education and care home environment

'Fit for purpose'

Children need access to an environment that is 'fit for purpose' – that is, it can support children “to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society” ([Te Whāriki](#)).

Consideration must be given to how the home-based environment would reflect the curriculum framework and support the level of quality education and care required in the regulations.

It is the responsibility of the licensed home-based service provider to ensure that the premises and facilities used are fit for purpose.

Can the premises support the provision of different types of indoor and outdoor play?

Are there spaces for quiet activities and areas for physically active play?

How would the environment cater for individual and group learning experiences appropriate to the experience-base, cultural contexts, ages, abilities and interests of the children attending?

Can children be effectively supervised when accessing the indoor and outdoor areas?

One benefit of home-based education and care is that the equipment, experiences, opportunities, materials and provisions that are part of everyday home and community life (for example, pots, pans, couches, local parks, libraries) are readily available for children and educators to use.

It is useful for educators to think about the implications of providing home-based education and care in their own homes. Welcoming children and their families, as well as service coordinators, into their home is an integral part of an educator's role and it is important that educators and other family members are comfortable with this happening. Educators should consider how their home will be used. For instance will all rooms be available for children to use or will some rooms (for example, a teenager's room) be inaccessible? Can these rooms be locked?

Compliance with the Building Act

To ensure the safety and well-being of children, each home in the home-based service must conform to any relevant local authority by-laws, and any recent work done to a home must comply with the requirements of the [Building Act 2004\(external link\)](#). Home-based service providers are required to ensure that any compliance documentation (for instance, a code of compliance certificate issued under [section 95 of the Building Act 2004\(external link\)](#) for any building work undertaken) is available.

Any premises undergoing alterations, or having undergone alterations since 2004, must conform to the Building Act 2004. Documentation such as a code of compliance certificate will need to be viewed and noted by service providers.

Building warrants of fitness and compliance schedules are not commonly needed in residential homes. These documents are required under the Building Act only when the building has an escalator, lift, cable car, automatic doors, or particular kind of fire alarm – they provide evidence that these mechanical systems are maintained in good working order.

If the residential premises have a cable car for access, the owner of the premises is required to have a compliance schedule under section 100 of the Building Act 2004 and provide evidence that a current annual building warrant of fitness is held.

For more information read [PF3 Building Act compliance](#).

Resources

The following resources may help you.

[Ngā Kupu Oranga Healthy Messages\(external link\)](#) A health and safety resource for early childhood centres produced by the Ministry of Health. Home-based services will also find it useful. Section B6 discusses cleaning and disinfecting processes.

The [New Zealand Home-based Early Childhood Education Association\(external link\)](#) may provide support and advice to services.

Additional guidance is available specifically for home-based services above ground level. We recommend reading this. [Guidance for ECE Services – Evacuation from High Rise Buildings\[PDF, 260 KB\]](#).

The Ministry of Education also provides guidance for each criterion of the regulations.

Suggested equipment for home-based ECE services

Overview

This information has been designed to help you ensure that children in home-based services have access to high-quality care and education environments.

Home environments provide learning opportunities and experiences in contexts that are different from centres. The daily occurrences and materials that are already part of the home environment (such as cooking, shopping, gardening)

provide rich learning opportunities for children. Remember though that a strength for home-based education is the opportunity for children to go out and about in the community. Educators should be encouraged to utilise the equipment, opportunities and resources that are available in their local communities.

As a service provider you must ensure that the homes used in your service are equipped to provide for the children who attend. Variety, quality and quantity of equipment is required to enable educators to support the wide range of learning and abilities and interests of the children attending.

Te Whāriki

The aspiration statement and the 4 principles of Te Whāriki underpin all that we do in early childhood education. When providing an enriched environment for children, we must ensure the principles underpin any decisions.

It is vital that educators take opportunities to extend children's thinking and encourage children to have a perception of themselves as explorers - competent, confident learners who ask questions and make discoveries.

Relating equipment to the principles and strands of Te Whāriki

When providing an enriched environment for children, we must ensure that the principles and strands of Te Whāriki are at the centre of our planning decisions.

Principles

Empowerment/whakamana – the early childhood curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow.

Holistic development/kotahitanga - the early childhood curriculum reflects the holistic way children learn and grow.

Family and community/whānau tangata – the wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum.

Relationships/ngā hononga – children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things.

Well-being/mana atua – the health and well-being of the child are protected and nurtured.

Belonging/mana whenua – children and their families feel a sense of belonging.

Equipment and resources should reflect Maori tikanga and language

Equipment and resources reflect the cultures in the local community

Contribution/mana tangata – opportunities for learning are equitable, and each child's contribution is valued.

Resources should reflect differing attitudes and feelings that will help children to accept other people who are different from themselves.

Equipment should encourage children to solve conflicts in a peaceful way and will develop positive and constructive attitudes to competition.

Communication/mana reo – the languages and symbols of children's own and other cultures are promoted and

protected.

A range of resources that support and promote communication are available:

Books, language, talking, storytelling, puppets, listening and Māori resources

Papatūānuku/natural materials stones, bark, shells, etc

Written language – te reo Māori visually seen, numbers, waiata, etc.

Equipment and resources to support creative expression in areas such as art, music, dance, construction

Greeting each person in their language

Visual resources

Music and instruments from other countries

Fantasy play – dress-up clothes, eating utensils, etc.

Puzzles and books

Resources from support agencies for families to access

Opportunities for emerging literacy

Equipment, furniture and layout to support conversations e.g. cushions, sofas, mat/carpet.

Exploration/mana aturoa – the child learns through active exploration of the environment.

The following equipment and resources could be available to children:

Books and storytelling props

Puzzles and manipulative equipment

Blocks

Materials that foster creativity

Dough and clay

Dramatic play resources

Sand

Water

Natural materials (for example, stones, bark, shells), animals, and science resources (for example, magnifying glasses, magnets, microscopes, experiment books), etc

Carpentry equipment and resources that promote physically active play resources (for example, cardboard, blankets, wood) that enable large constructions such as huts, boats, etc Paper, pens, rulers, etc

Papatūānuku/natural materials

ICT equipment

Equipment lists

In an environment that provides opportunities for choices, planning and problem solving, children have access to, and can easily obtain, a variety of tools and resources. Educators should consider what equipment, resources and materials are readily available in their home environments that can be used by children. A service may supplement an educator's home resources by providing their own resource/toy library lending facility that educators can access.

When selecting equipment for children, it is essential to consider the 3 broad age groups (as described in Te Whāriki):

Infants – birth to 18 months

Toddlers – one to 3 years

Young children – from 2 years 6 months to school entry age.

Safety, size and durability are key issues to consider when choosing material, equipment and resources to purchase or enable children to access. Ask the following questions:

How long will it last with daily use?

Is it non-toxic? What type of paint has been used to colour it?

Does it have rounded edges to prevent cuts etc?

Is it safe for babies? Could a baby swallow it?

Is the size appropriate for a child's hand or foot etc?

Is it easily cleaned?

The following lists provide some ideas of equipment that services may include in their 'resources library'. This enables educators to have access to extra equipment to extend children's thinking and learning. Diversity in equipment is encouraged and these lists can be adapted and extended to accommodate an individual focus or philosophy. Many other items of equipment could be added to the lists.

Suggested equipment for children who are over 2 years old

This list has been included to provide ideas of equipment that home-based service providers may include in their 'resources library' (equipment they can lend to educators). This enables educators to have access to extra equipment to extend children's thinking and learning.

This is a suggested list which is by no means exhaustive. The resources and equipment you may include will be determined in part by the developing interests and passions of the children in your service, and their communities.

While this list is intended to support service providers to consider the equipment they may need to have available for lending to educators, educators themselves may wish to use the list headings as a basis for considering what equipment, tools and resources they have available, or can adapt, in their homes and local communities for children to use.

For a range of play ideas read the [play ideas for playgroups](#), which you can also use at your home-based service as long as you're following the regulations and licensing criteria that apply to your service type.

Additional activities and equipment include the following.

Creativity

Equipment

A wide range of resources that could be used for creating is likely to include:

Connecting materials such as:

a variety of glue such as PVA, Polycell, glue pots and brushes of assorted sizes
staplers

Cellotape, masking tape and dispensers

balls of string.

Crafting materials such as :

felt pens

crayons and pastels

pencils

ruler scissors (children's and adults), including left-handed scissors

non-toxic colouring pens in a range of colours

hole-punch

collage materials such as material scraps and natural materials (leaves and seeds), glitter (including containers).

Active play

Equipment

Ladders

Planks

Wooden boxes, variety of sizes and heights

Tyres – (not steel belted)

Balls

Hessian – large sheets

Ropes – several

Wheeled vehicles – for example, trikes, trolleys, ride-ons, large trucks, wheelbarrows, etc

Hula hoops

Adult education

Equipment

Range of parenting books

Activity idea books

Health information

Māori dictionary

Suggested equipment for children who are under 2 years old

This list has been included to provide ideas of equipment that home-based service providers may include in their 'resources library' (equipment they can lend to educators). This enables educators to have access to extra equipment to extend children's thinking and learning.

This is a suggested list which is by no means exhaustive. The resources and equipment you may include will be determined in part by the developing interests and passions of the children in your service and their communities.

While this list is intended to support service providers to consider the equipment they may need to have available for

lending to educators, educators themselves may wish to use the list headings as a basis for considering what equipment, tools, and resources they have available, or can adapt, in their homes and local communities for children to use.

Furnishings

Equipment

Tri-pillow
Crawling mat/squabs and cushions
Cots
Prams
High-chairs

For a range of play ideas read the [play ideas for playgroups](#), which you can also use at your home-based service as long as you're following the regulations and licensing criteria that apply to your service type.

Additional activities and equipment include the following.

Active play

Equipment

Balls
Wheeled vehicles, for example trikes, trolleys, ride-ons, push-alongs, wheelbarrows
Various sized planks and ladders
Various small boxes, variety of sizes and heights
Swings
Push and pull-along toys

Adult education

Equipment

Range of parenting books
Activity idea books
Health information
Māori dictionary

What is a home-based education and care service?

Home-based education and care services are defined in [section 10 of the Education and Training Act 2020](#)^{external}

[link](#)) as those that provide “education or care, for gain or reward, to children who are under the age of 5 years, or who are 5 years of age but not enrolled in school, in -

- the children’s own home; or
- the home of the person providing the education or care; or
- any other home nominated by the parents of the children; and

includes the provision of education or care to any child of the person providing the service who is

- under the age of 5 years; or
- 5 years of age but not enrolled in school”.

‘Gain or reward’ means that educators must be paid or receive some quantifiable benefit for the service they provide.

The use of volunteer or unpaid educators excludes the service provider from holding a licence as the service provider does not meet the definition of a home-based ECE service under the Education and Training Act 2020.