Self review guidelines

For an organisation to grow and improve the quality of its services it is important it monitors its performance. Ngā Arohaehae Whai Hua/Self-review Guidelines for Early Childhood Education were created with this in mind.

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Introduction

Overview

> "You may make mistakes at first - kia kaha! Allow those mistakes to be your friend and teach you." - Puketapu-Hetet, 1999, page 59

Overview

Review is the deliberate process of preparing, gathering, making sense of information, and deciding in order to bring about improvement. It offers opportunities for early childhood education services to evaluate the impact of practice on children's learning.

'Ngā Arohaehae Whai Hua/Self-review Guidelines for Early Childhood Education' supports teachers, kaiako, management, families, and whānau to learn about review and to improve the effectiveness of self-review processes.

The main body of this document is divided into three sections. The first section explores the concept of review. The second section outlines the review process, and the third section invites us to reflect on our self-review process by considering the elements of effective review. Each section concludes with a series of questions to provoke our thinking.

The appendices include examples of self-review in practice. Review stories have been provided by a range of early childhood education services. Their stories show different ways of going about review – each reflecting the focus for review that their service had at the time.

Templates of review plans and frameworks that can be used as guides for review are also included in the appendices. A glossary and references follow at the back.

The use of "we" in this document signifies an inclusive approach to self-review as all members of the early childhood education learning community have opportunities to participate.

The whakatauākī in this document provide a way of considering review concepts from a kaupapa Māori perspective. Whakatauākī are sayings that have many meanings rather than direct translations. They should be read in this light.

Te Whāriki and raranga - Te Whāriki me te raranga

> "...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, page 9

> "Of all the Māori weaving techniques, raranga is the one that has best survived. ...it also has the strongest links with Pacific Island weaving." - Puketapu-Hetet, 1999, page 44.

The early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki, explains that everything we do has an impact on learning and teaching. We use the term "whāriki" to describe the day-to-day, collective weaving of curriculum for our tamariki. The way we weave together the distinct patterns of our curriculum defines what we do and how we do it.

As members of an early childhood education service, we belong to a community of weavers, working together to provide the best possible learning and teaching for children.

'Ngā Arohaehae Whai Hua/Self-review Guidelines for Early Childhood Education'builds on the weaving metaphor introduced in Te Whāriki by supporting us to examine the whāriki that each early childhood education service weaves for its children.

Raranga[1] is the technique used across cultures to weave a whāriki/mat. The metaphor of raranga can provide a way of understanding review. The process of raranga reminds us to pause in our work, to look closely at the way our curriculum whāriki has been woven, and to evaluate our practice.

This document uses raranga imagery to guide us through the process of review. Review is an important part of what we do together to generate growth through improvement. By pausing in our work and evaluating the effectiveness of our curriculum, we have opportunities to transform practice. Such is the nature of review.

¹ Raranga is known as lalaga in some Pacific communities.

Section 1: Exploring review

"E mau ō ringa ki ngā akaaka a Tāwhaki kia tārewa tū ki te rangi.

May your hands grasp the vines of Tāwhaki, which lead to the sky above."

This whakatauaki describes the importance of taking opportunities that lead to understanding. In the context of review, it reminds us of our overarching purpose - to take responsibility for the quality of our practice in order to support and improve children's learning. Through self-review, we know how well our practices are achieving this goal.

What is review?

Review is the deliberate and ongoing process of finding out how well our practice enhances children's learning and development. Review allows us to see which aspects of our practice are working well and what we could do better. As a result, we can make decisions about what to do to improve. Through review, our practice is transformed and, ultimately, children's learning benefits.

Self-review and **external review** are complementary review processes in which all early childhood education services are involved.

Self-review is a review that is undertaken from within an early childhood education service in order to evaluate practice. This may also be called internal review, quality review, or centre review. Self-review is usually based on the priorities set by the service. Self-review is conducted within the early childhood education service by members of that same service (who are sometimes referred to as a "learning community"[2]).

External review is a review in which an external body, such as the Education Review Office, evaluates the quality of education in an early childhood education service. External review is usually based on a combination of external and local priorities. It is conducted within each early childhood education service by people who are not members of that service. They bring an outsider's perspective to review.

Self-review and external review share a similar purpose in helping us to identify:

the aspects of our practice we are doing well
the aspects we may need to improve
the actions we should take as a result of what we learn about our practice.

Together, these complementary reviews enable early childhood education services to improve practice in relation to children's learning.

Self-review is both planned and spontaneous.

Planned review takes place when we set out a plan, or schedule, of what we will review and decide over what period of time we will review it. Planned review ensures that we are evaluating regularly and across all areas of practice over

time. It takes account of what is happening in our service and of our priorities. It is both manageable and flexible.

Spontaneous review takes place when we respond to issues or events that arise in our service on a day-to-day basis. Spontaneous review allows us to be responsive to immediate issues and priorities. We can adapt our review schedule to accommodate changing priorities.

[2] Ke i Tua o te Pae, Book 1, page 3

Why undertake self-review?

> "Just think of the children, and review is real!" - Education and care service
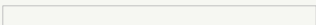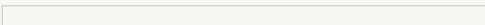
Self-review has two key purposes:

> The first purpose of self-review is improvement: it enables us to improve our practice. We ensure that our practice supports children's learning in the best possible ways.
> The second is accountability: it enables us to ensure that we are meeting our legal requirements. This is called compliance. We check to make sure that we are meeting our legal requirements, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

In review, both purposes are important in achieving positive learning outcomes for children.

Images of whāriki/mats from Sāmoan culture can be useful in helping us to understand the relationship between these dual purposes.

Ie toga, a fine mat, is prestigious and an item of great worth in Sāmoan society. It holds special significance because it is intricate and ornate - representing the value given to the craft	Papa laufala, an everyday mat, is functional and useful. It provides a foundation for both the weaver and the people who sit on it. Without this mat as the ground cover, we would not be able to enjoy the beauty of ʻie toga.

When do we undertake self-review?

Self-review is an ongoing process. When we recognise that review is concerned with improving the quality of our curriculum, it becomes an important part of our daily practice. The question of timing is determined to some extent by the specific focus of the review and whether our review is planned or spontaneous.

Planned review involves a review schedule or plan that spans a period of time (usually between 1 and 3 years). It sets out a plan for regular self-review over time.

Spontaneous review takes place in response to an issue or concern. Spontaneous review doesn't wait for a schedule.

Why should we document self-review?

Documenting self-review is helpful for a number of reasons:

It makes our review process transparent for everyone.

It helps us to keep a record of our reviews over time.

It serves as a reminder of our intentions and discoveries in review.

It enables us to share our reviews with others (including external reviewers).

Both planned and spontaneous reviews can be documented.

Documenting planned reviews involves developing a formal procedure for review. This can be expressed in a policy/procedural statement.

Documentation includes:

a planned review programme that spans 1-3 years and covers all areas of practice over time (see Appendix 2)

a plan for each review (see 'Preparing a plan' in Section 2 and Appendix 2)

a record of the information gathered and analysed that supports review findings

a plan for change (see 'Developing a plan for change' in Section 2 and Appendix 2).

Documenting spontaneous reviews involves recording happenings and events that trigger a review as well as the review process and outcomes. Spontaneous reviews are often documented after the actual review has taken place.

Documenting planned and spontaneous reviews allows us to keep a record of the process, information gathered, and outcome of each review and to monitor the implementation of our action plan. Appendix 1 provides some examples of documented self-review from a range of early childhood education services.

You can also use the links below to view samples of documented review:

Sample 1 - A systematic review schedule

Our vision: We aspire for children to be confident explorers, keen inquirers, and creative thinkers. Our learning environment will enrich and enhance the knowledge, skills, and dispositions children bring to the learning experience. Through collaborative relationships, we will work with children and their families/whānau to promote positive learning outcomes for all children.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS VISION (DIRECTION)	KEY PRACTICES FOR REVIEW FOCUS	WHEN REVIEW WILL TAKE PLACE
Goal 1 Children will have access to a wide range of appropriate resources (that promote meaningful exploration).	Learning and teaching practice	May-June 2005
Goal 2 Adults will be responsive to children's questions and cues (to promote inquiry).	Learning and teaching practice	August-November 2005

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS VISION (DIRECTION)	KEY PRACTICES FOR REVIEW FOCUS	WHEN REVIEW WILL TAKE PLACE
Goal 3 Adults will actively encourage and acknowledge children's ideas and suggestions in the learning and teaching context.	Learning and teaching practice	August-November 2005
Goal 4 Adults will provide a diverse range of opportunities for families, whānau, and the wider community to be involved in children's learning.	Collaborative practice Learning and teaching practice	March-October 2005
Meeting accountabilities	Governance and management practice	January-Sept 2005

Sample 2 - Example of a review plan

Review Plan: May-June 2005

INDICATORS (LINKED TO GOAL)	KEY PRACTICE FOR FOCUS	FOCUS FOR REVIEW
Children will use resources to: solve problems classify look for patterns make comparisons explain to others (Te Whariki, page 88)	Learning and teaching practice	To what extent our current range of resources (equipment and materials) promote exploration for our 4-year-old children?

TIMEFRAME	GATHERING INFORMATION

TIMEFRAME	GATHERING INFORMATION
May-June 2005	Over a two-week period, gather information about children (4 year olds) using resources in the centre. Staff member X will code children's (4 year olds') use of resources in existing learning stories documented over the past six months, using indicator criteria. Staff member Y will video children (4 year olds) using resources for a total of 15 minutes daily (staggered throughout the day) over a period of one week. Staff member Z will support children (4 year olds) to take photographs of resources that promote exploration. Children (4 year olds) will be invited to share and discuss photographs. Teachers will view and code video footage and photographs at the next staff meeting.

TOOLS	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
Existing learning stories Video and photographs (existing and new)	Do we have consent of children (4 year olds) and parents for use of existing learning stories/photographs? Have we got consent for videoing and photographing children? How will we ensure that children have a choice about the extent of their involvement? How will we let parents know what we are doing and why? How will we share the findings of this review and with whom?

What do we review?

Te Whāriki (page 10) describes curriculum as "the sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development".

"This review caused us to relook at our curriculum policy. Even just looking at programme planning, we've now realised that we need to look at other things too - things like appraisal, policy, and health. Review opens us up for a really good look!" - Home-based education service

We review our practice - everything we do! Deliberate and careful review of our practice provides the opportunity to improve our curriculum, in its fullest sense, over time.

There are three key areas of practice contributing to the functionality and quality of our curriculum whāriki. They are:

    learning and teaching practice
    collaborative practice
    governance and management practice.

These areas of practice are relevant to all early childhood education services but will be approached in different ways according to identified priorities. Over time, services will evaluate each area of practice through review. A review plan

or schedule ensures that no area is overlooked.

In review, the relationship between these areas of practice and the principles of Te Whāriki can be described as the warp and weft of a weaving. The principles of Te Whāriki can be represented in the warp. This is the foundation for our work. These principles act as a stable framework and are always the basis for review. They establish a foundation for reviewing our practice by asking:

How well does our practice empower children to learn and to grow? (Empowerment/Whakamana)
To what extent does our practice reflect the holistic nature of learning? (Holistic development/Kotahitanga)
How integral to our practice is the wider world of family and community? (Family and community/Whānau tangata)
To what extent does our practice support children to learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things? (Relationships/Ngā hononga)

Drawing on the principles of Te Whāriki in review enables us to evaluate practice in the light of our shared beliefs about what really matters.

The areas of practice can be likened to the weft of the weaving - where different threads are selected according to the review priorities of our service. These priorities are developed in response to our obligations to meet legal requirements and our commitment to quality education.

Learning and teaching practice - Tikanga whakaako

Learning and teaching practice is what we do to foster children's learning. It can best be described by the term "ako", which acknowledges learning and teaching as reciprocal processes. In embracing the concept of "ako", we recognise the fact that learning is ongoing and context based. The way we foster learning is informed by our knowledge of theory and of practice as well as by our ability to put theory into practice (and vice versa).

Loris Malaguzzi (1998) describes the relationship between learning and teaching as interconnected: "they should embark together on a journey down the water. Through an active, reciprocal exchange, teaching can strengthen learning how to learn" (page 83).

 Learning and teaching practice includes such things as:

our ability to notice, recognise, and respond[4]
curriculum planning and evaluation
responsive and reciprocal relationships.

When we review learning and teaching practice, we ask "How well do we foster children's learning?" In responding to this question, we explore what we do, what we say, what we believe, what we know, and what the result is for children in our service. We want to know how well aspects of our practice support children in their learning.

[4] Kei Tua o te Pae, Book 1, page 6

Collaborative practice - Te mahi ngātahi

Collaborative practice is concerned with the way we work together. When everyone has authentic opportunities to learn and contribute to learning, we become a learning community. A learning community is built on a shared set of values, such as respect, trust, honesty, empathy, sharing, safety, and concern for one another. The way we work together is informed by our understanding of one another, our ability to ask for and respect the opinions of others, and the recognition we are able to give to the wider world of the child and their family. When we are prepared to embrace the perspectives and views of others, we add great richness to our curriculum whāriki.

"Book 4 of Kei Tua o te Pae emphasises the importance of shifting the balance of power to 'reflect children's increasing ability and inclination to steer their own course, set their own goals, assess their own achievements, and take on some of the responsibility for learning' (page 2)."

 Collaborative practice includes:

processes that we have in place for ongoing consultation with members of our learning community
authentic partnerships with local iwi that facilitate appropriate Treaty-based approaches to learning
systems, such as portfolios, that enable children's voices to be heard in all aspects of the learning process (Kei Tua o te Pae, Book 4, page 2).

When we review collaborative practice, we ask, "How well do we work together?" In responding to this question, we explore what we do, what we say, what we believe, what we know, and what is happening as a result. We are keen to find out how responsive and reciprocal our relationships really are in supporting learning.

Governance and management practice - Te mahi whakahaere

Governance and management practice is concerned with the responsibilities for operating our service - both now and in the future - and the ways we keep things running smoothly. The importance of sound governance and management practice in our early childhood education service can be expressed through this well-known whakataukī.

Ka pai ki muri,
Ka pai ki mua,
Ka pai ngā mea katoa.

If the back's right,
the front's right.
It's all good.

The way we govern and manage our service is informed by our knowledge of service priorities and external

expectations. When everyone is aware of what is expected, we are in a position to successfully achieve our shared goals.

Governing and Managing Your Early Childhood Service (2004) distinguishes between governance and management.

"'Governing is being responsible for your centre so that it will be running well for many years", whereas 'Managing is doing the day to day things at the centre so your long term plan is achieved' (pages 12–13)."

These practices may be shared by the same people or separated out, depending on the organisation of each service.

Governance and management practice includes:

planning for the future
developing and maintaining systems
formulating and reviewing policies and procedures.

When we review governance and management practice, we ask, "How well do we govern and manage our service to support children's learning?" In responding to this question, we explore what we do, what we say, what we believe, what we know, and what is happening as a result. We are interested in finding out how well aspects of our governance and management support children's learning.

Some questions to think about - Hei whakaaro iho

How do we strike a balance between planned and spontaneous reviews in our service?

To what extent does our documentation convey the depth and breadth of review that takes place in our service? Would other people understand the documentation if we showed it to them?

How much emphasis do we place on review that fulfils our accountabilities as opposed to review that seeks improvement? Is there a healthy balance between the two?

What does review tell us about our practice in relation to the principles of Te Whāriki?

What aspects of our practice do we regularly focus on? Why?

What aspects of our practice do we overlook? Why?

What do we know about how well we are doing in relation to our:

learning and teaching practice?
collaborative practice?
governance and management practice?

How do we know that children's learning is being enhanced through our practice? What evidence do we have?

Section 2: The review process

> "Whatu ngā whenu a takapa, kia tāpui, kia ita.
> Weave the strands of the takapa so they may become intertwined and strong."

This whakatauākī emphasises the importance of the strands of the takapa being woven together in a way that will make them strong and enhance the mat. In the context of review, following a process can support us to engage in review that is relevant and empowering. As we work through this section, we can ask ourselves, "How effective are our review processes in providing evidence that we can use to inform and transform our practice?"

Preparing, gathering, making sense, and deciding form the basis for review. Like a weaving, they overlap and interlink, but they are all important parts of the process. We move back and forth between the parts of the process according to the pattern of our curriculum whariki - which aspects of our practice we want to look at in review and why.

A review story from Aratika Educare (fictitious name for this service) illustrates the process of preparing, gathering, making sense, and deciding. Their review took place over a three-month period.

Preparing - Te whakarite

In preparing for review, we want to be clear about what we are looking at and why. Preparing for review involves:

identifying the trigger for review
developing a focus
establishing indicators to guide us
identifying sources of information
preparing a plan.

What will we review? - Me arohaehae tātou i te aha?

Review can be either planned or spontaneous.

Planned review can be triggered by:

our review schedule or plan
an Education Review Office recommendation
an outcome of a previous spontaneous review
an issue arising from a previous planned review that prompts us to look at an aspect of our practice that sits outside our schedule
our vision and strategic planning goals.

Spontaneous review can be triggered by:

an incident
a comment

an event or issue

a question that we want to answer

an observation

a new piece of information that challenges what we do now.

At Aratika Educare's monthly meeting, parents, teachers, and management referred to their biannual review plan. The plan included the development and implementation of a questionnaire that asked parents about various aspects of learning and teaching practice. When they had done this in the past, they had received a nil response. They knew that they needed to try a different approach so that they could find out parents' views about what was happening for their children. This proved to be the trigger for self-review.

Whether a review is spontaneous or planned, preparation requires us to prioritise aspects of our practice. Once we have identified which area of our practice we want to target for review, we can develop a review focus. (Three areas of practice that can be reviewed are outlined in Section 1 under 'What do we review?')

Aratika Educare chose to review collaborative practice because they had identified communication with parents as a priority for review. This priority was based on a previous lack of response from parents.

A review focus can be expressed as a question or statement that helps us to be more specific about what aspect of practice we want to look at. This focus continues to be at the forefront of our thinking throughout the review process and helps us to target our findings.

Aratika Educare developed the following focus, expressed as a question:

How effective are our communication and consultation processes with parents/whanau?

Once the focus was determined, the participants at the Aratika Educare meeting called for representatives from teaching staff, management, and the parent community to plan the review. They became the review team for this particular focus.

Questions can assist us in developing a focus for review.

The principles of Te Whāriki can be used to frame questions. The reflective questions from Te Whāriki can be utilised in a similar way. The Education Review Office also offers some useful evaluative questions to help us focus a review (see Framework and Resources for Early Childhood Education Review(external link)).

There are a number of publications that assist early childhood education services in evaluating practice. There are specific documents, such as these guidelines and a wide range of books and articles that can be accessed to support us in preparing to review by offering different methodologies to try. These can include research texts, which can be adapted for review.

How will we be clear about what we want to find out? - Me pēhea tātou e mōhio ka tika, ki tā tātou e hiahia ana?

In preparing for review, we select or develop indicators that allow us to shape our information gathering. Later in the process, we can check the information we have gathered against the indicators to help us make judgments.

Indicators are usually expressed as a statement of what we would expect to see. They are written using active language, such as "Educators are …" or "Adults respond …". There can be more than one indicator for a review focus. We can select indicators that link to our vision, goals, and priorities if we want to provide a strategic element to review (see Section 3).

The process of developing indicators as we prepare gives us an opportunity to talk to one another about what is valued and why.

Indicators work best in review when they:

focus on what is important
can be observed
are easily understood by everyone involved
facilitate reflection.

There are indicators already available that can be used to guide our review:

evaluation indicators from 'Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Early Childhood Services'
performance indicators from 'Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers'
indicators from '**Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Kohānga Reo(external link)**'
a range of indicators from 'Booth and Ainscow's (2004) 'Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning, Participation and Play in Early Years and Childcare'
the cultural input exemplar from Bevan-Brown's (2003) **The Cultural Self-review: Providing Culturally Effective, Inclusive Education For Maori Learners(external link)**'.

Each set of indicators offers a way of looking at aspects of practice in review.

We can also develop our own indicators for review. In doing so, we ask ourselves, "What would this aspect of practice look like if it were effective?" The benefit of developing indicators for ourselves is that they are grounded in the knowledge and skills that are valued within our learning community.

The Aratika Educare review team met together the following week. They drew on a goal from their strategic plan (one that was related to the review focus) as a guide for the review:

To maintain/enhance/encourage communication between centre and staff/parents/management.

From this broad goal, they developed a set of indicators, in relation to the review focus, that showed them what to look for in the review.

The indicators they developed were:

Teachers are communicating with parents about their children's learning in consistent, authentic ways and at regular intervals.
Parents have multiple opportunities to contribute to their child's learning at the centre.
Teachers are available for parents when they need to talk about their child.
Parents regularly seek opportunities to share information about their child's learning.

What can help us? - He aha hei awhina atu?

In preparing, we identify what information we need to source for review. The information we identify will be determined by our review focus and associated indicators. There is a range of records, resources, and processes available that will enable us to gather the most relevant information. These include records kept within the service that can be accessed as potential sources of information, for example, meeting minutes, children's profiles, or other assessment records. When we consider using this information, we ask, "What do we already know, or think we know, about this review focus?" and "What sources of information already exist that can help us learn more?"

There are also processes of enquiry that we can utilise to provide information about aspects of our practice. These include face-to-face meetings (such as hui, fono), interviews (such as telephone, individual, or focus-group), questionnaires or surveys, and observations of one another. When we choose one of these processes, we are intentionally seeking new information that can shed light on aspects of our practice. We ask, "What more do we need to find out about our practice, and how will this information help?"

We can also use resources to present aspects of review.

The most effective sources of information in review are:

relevant for our service
relevant to our purpose in review
able to get "under the surface"
easy to use
easily accessible.

Several potential resources that can support review are outlined in Appendix 2.

Preparing a plan - Te whakarite kaupapa

A review plan can assist in organising our review. Not only will a plan make the review accessible for everyone, but it also provides a means of clarifying responsibilities and processes. A review plan has a place even in spontaneous review. Taking the time to stop and plan helps us to maintain our focus.

The following plan was used by Aratika Educare and is provided as a template for us to use or adapt in Appendix 2:

What is our review focus?

How effective are our communication and consultation processes with parents/whanau?

What indicators will we use?

Teachers are communicating with parents about their children's learning in consistent, authentic ways and at regular intervals.
Parents have multiple opportunities to contribute to their child's learning at the centre.
Teachers are available for parents when they need to talk about their child.

Parents regularly seek opportunities to share information about their child's learning.

Who will be involved?

Five teachers and five parents from the under-twos and the over-twos areas, as well as the Centre Director, will form a review team. All parents will be invited to complete the survey. Children's voices will be heard through their profile records.

How long will we take?

The review will take place over a 2-month period.

When will we start?

10 October.

What resources will we use?

Children's profiles - the review team will investigate the content of these by asking questions such as "Was there continuity from teachers?" and "How much were parents contributing to the profile?" We planned for the teachers on the team to do this investigation and to report back on their findings without referring specifically to individual teachers or children.

A survey in which parents will be asked how satisfied they are with communication between management and staff and with the way that information about their child's progress is communicated to them.

How will we document this review?

The review team will record the review process in a report format that will then be analysed at a centre management meeting. The results will then be presented to the centre community in a booklet.

Gathering - Te kohikohi

Gathering involves collecting together information that will help us to explore our review focus. The quality of the information we gather is more important than the quantity. We want to make sure that the information we gather provides us with the evidence we need to evaluate our practice in terms of what works well and what doesn't, thus providing direction for change.

How will we find out? - Me pehea tātou e whai mohiotanga?

We gather together the information we need by using the records and/or the processes we identified in preparing.

For example, we might seek feedback on the effectiveness of a particular policy or teaching strategy by asking others, or we could collect information by observing one another. We might also look through our daily diary to see the sorts of comments parents make about a particular issue, or we could revisit children's profiles to check that we really do involve children in documenting their own learning.

There are two main ways we can gather information.

1. Quantitatively

We can gather it **quantitatively** by counting or measuring number-based information. Processes such as questionnaire scales, multi-choice questions, and duration or event recordings of observations can assist us in gathering information quantitatively.

2. Qualitatively

We can gather it **qualitatively** by discussing and recording ideas or comments. Processes such as open-ended questions, recorded conversations, or narrative recordings of observations can assist us in gathering information qualitatively.

When gathering information, we draw on a range of information sources to ensure that we have a sound evidence base from which to make judgments about our practice. In gathering information, we will want to consider issues such as:

Are we sure that this information will give a fair representation of this aspect of practice?
Do we have confidence that this information will provide evidence to inform our judgments?

We monitor the gathering process to make sure that the information we gather and the way we gather it represents an authentic view of our practice. It would be unwise to gather information that was incomplete or flawed in some way. We want to make sure that the time and place where information was gathered represents an ongoing reality rather than a one-off event. For example, Aratika Educare could have chosen to survey only the parents on their management committee or to select profiles from the most experienced teachers. However, in doing so, their selection would not have represented the views or practices of the whole centre. Section 3 provides further examples of issues to consider when gathering valid and reliable information to use as evidence for review.

The Aratika Educare review team found that gathering information took longer than they had anticipated. This was partly because they discovered that their original plan needed adjustment once they got under way. Their description of gathering highlights the interwoven aspect of review - where movement back and forth between parts of the process is sometimes necessary to provide the most relevant information.

Here is their story.

As there was a lot going on, we worked hard to avoid putting any pressure on anyone to participate. Some aspects took longer than expected, and others were very easy to administer. For example, the parent survey took a lot of time for the review team to design in a way that would give us the information we needed, but it was very quick for parents to do and for us to make sense of. We chose to use a five-point scale based on our previous survey. We felt that this would give parents options for a wider variation of responses.

Having parents involved in the development of this survey was so good. We changed a lot because the parents would say things like "Well, what is that? You need to give me some space on this form, some space where I can talk about things that are important to me - like the gate that annoys me every time I come into the centre - where is my space to write about that?" This made us think about being open to other things that we hadn't thought about before, or to priorities that other people had, which led us to develop a format that provided more blank spaces for comments.

In our original plan, we said that we would read through each profile, but with only five teachers on the review team, this proved to be unrealistic. In the end, we decided to narrow it down to the investigation of two profiles from each

member of the larger teaching team (as each teacher is responsible for a group of children's profiles). These were randomly selected. We have twenty staff across both centres, so this meant analysing forty profiles!

We also decided to take a closer look at Book 5 of Kei Tua o te Pae (Assessment and Learning: Community) which had recently arrived in our centre. We did this to see if there was any important information that we should be considering in our investigation of the profiles that we might not otherwise have considered.

We revised our review plan to take in these changes and to include a longer time frame and the provision of teacher-release time to enable the teachers to gather the information from the profiles.

Making sense - Te whai matauranga

Making sense involves us in a process of analysis. We scrutinise each aspect of the information we have gathered in order to create meaning. In doing so, the information becomes a source of evidence that informs our review and allows us to make judgments about our practice.

What does our information tell us? - He aha nga hua ka puta mai i nga kōrero nei?

This question leads us to look closely at each piece of information we have gathered. We want to know what it can tell us about our practice in relation to the review focus. We look for:

issues that come up again and again
emerging trends or patterns
anything seemingly insignificant that we need to be careful not to overlook
one-off or unexpected pieces of information.

There are approaches to analysis that we can select from in making sense of the information we have gathered.

A **descriptive approach** allows us to make sense of information we have gathered qualitatively by:

looking for themes or patterns in clusters or groups of ideas and issues in our information
looking for contradictions where we have pieces of information that seem to be inconsistent with the rest
using predetermined categories where we have a specific purpose in mind and will have designed our gathering accordingly - this is a targeted approach and may have links to conceptual frameworks or indicators that we have developed as part of our preparation.

A descriptive approach to analysis allows us to draw conclusions from the information in a wide range of ways. We may find exceptions or challenges that we have not previously considered. If we are responsive to such findings, we have the opportunity to explore new ways of looking at what we do and why.

Aratika Educare looked at the descriptive responses they had in their survey results. They used highlighter pens to work through each survey response, using different colours to highlight clusters of comments made about different kinds of communication. As their coding progressed, they began to recognise trends in the information, and some surprises emerged.

A **conceptual approach** allows us to interpret our information in relation to existing key ideas or theories (or statements that we have developed through indicators). There are several conceptual frameworks that we can access. These are usually identified at the beginning of the review process. For example, the Child's Questions (developed by Carr, May, and Podmore, 1998) is a conceptual framework provided by Te Whāriki.

The Focuses of Analysis is another conceptual framework based on the work of Barbara Rogoff (2003). Templates for both are provided in Appendix 2. In the case of Aratika Educare, the reflective questions in Kei Tua o te Pae provided a conceptual framework for analysis of the profiles.

After reading Book 5 of Kei Tua o te Pae the Aratika Educare review team realised that there were important considerations to be taken into account in their analysis of the profiles. These included making valued learning visible for everyone, fostering diverse pathways, and inviting participation.

As a result of the knowledge we gained, we developed the following criteria for our analysis of the profiles so that we had a shared understanding of what was important:

opportunities for parents to offer their perspectives in a range of ways (not always in the form of a response to our written learning stories)
links to home through knowledge derived from both the child and their family
consistent frequency and quality of entries.

In their analysis, the teachers worked through the profiles - looking for samples where parent perspectives were evident, where links to the home were derived from the child and their family, and where there was consistency in the frequency and quality of records across profiles. They wanted to know how learning was made visible and who contributed.

A numerical approach allows us to work with quantitative information. It can involve counting how often different episodes occur, comparing sets of figures and interpreting the meaning of clusters of numbers in questionnaires, surveys, or observations in which scales or measures have been used (McMillan and Meade, 1986). A numerical approach to analysis allows us to make comparisons between pieces of information. Combined with descriptive or conceptual approaches, a numerical approach to analysis can provide a strong evidence base to inform our judgments.

The Aratika Educare review team used numerical analysis to count up the frequency of survey responses based on a five-point scale they had used before. Although they found this analysis to be a quick process of adding up how many 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, and 5s were recorded for each question they had asked, they also found that there had been some confusion.

We recognised that we had not made it clear for parents that a "1" meant "unsatisfactory" and a "5" meant "highly satisfactory". As a result, we discovered that we might get a "1", recording "unsatisfactory", followed by a very positive comment that seemed to indicate that the interviewed person had interpreted the "1" to mean "highly satisfactory".

There was also a tendency for a scale like this to polarise people, which may have resulted in a number of "don't know" responses, of which there were several.

Each of the three approaches to making sense of information (descriptive, conceptual, and numerical) allows us to look at information in different ways. We may choose to use several different approaches to make sense of the same piece of information. Alternatively we can use one approach to look at a range of information.

What did we learn? - I ako tatou i te aha?

Making sense of information in the review process provides us with the evidence that will inform our judgments. As a result of the analysis we have completed, we are in a position to identify which aspects of our practice are positively impacting on children's learning and which aspects of our practice need improving. We draw together all of our analysis.

The Aratika Educare review team brought their findings to the next monthly meeting. They wrote the focus for the review on a large piece of paper and stuck it on the wall for everyone to see as they spoke.

How effective are our communication and consultation processes with parents/whanau?
They also recorded the indicators and shared their findings with the meeting.

Teachers are communicating with parents about their children's learning in consistent, authentic ways and at regular intervals.
The teachers concluded that the children's profiles did not always provide consistent information to parents.

Some profiles contained more information and are recorded in more frequently than others. As we have a designated teacher for every child, this meant that some families were receiving richer information about their child and receiving information consistently, while others were not.

Their report stated:

We did find some inconsistencies in the way profiles are completed and how often this is done. We also discovered, through this process, that our profiles offered quite different feedback in terms of content and quantity across teachers. The learning that was being made visible varied from teacher to teacher.

Parents have multiple opportunities to contribute to their child's learning at the centre.
In addition, they described the fact that the profiles usually invited parent feedback rather than "feed-forward" about children's learning.

We recognised that there was some stuff that we took for granted. For example, we realised that parents played a relatively passive role in the profiles. They responded to what teachers had said rather than vice versa. We teachers realised that we probably constrain parent input into the profiles because we offer only little boxes at the end of our learning stories. We don't invite parents to contribute in different ways.

Teachers are available for parents when they need to talk about their child.
The parents and teachers who had analysed the survey results shared the finding that parents had higher expectations for communication than the teachers had recognised.

The survey result showed that there was a clear message from parents about their expectations in relation to communication. Parents expressed their desire to find out in more detail how well their child was doing. Coding also revealed a strong message that parents valued informal chats, other forms of communication, and social opportunities.

One parent said: The review findings showed that the parents of children under two years old valued diary records of their children's day, whereas the parents of children over two years old did not specifically mention this.

The Director added: The teachers and I were surprised to learn that parents did not always realise that they could talk to staff about their children at any time. We thought that this was a given!

They shared their numerical analysis of the findings: Out of twenty-four questionnaire responses, twenty-one rated all aspects of communication very highly. However, we also found some inconsistencies in the results, which called into question the reliability of this information for the review.

How do we make judgements? - Me pehea ta tatou whakatau?

The process of making sense of the information we have gathered provides us with the evidence we need to make sound judgments about our practice.

Information - The information is what we have identified, gathered and now analysed
Evidence - The evidence is the analysed information we use to inform our judgements

In bringing together our evidence, we now ask:

What aspects of practice are we doing well?
What aspects of practice might we need to improve?

Making judgments about what we are doing well and what we might need to improve is often quite challenging. It is a collective process in which the emphasis is on sharing responsibility rather than on apportioning blame. We want to be sure that our judgments are informed by the evidence that has been generated from the review process rather than based on speculation or a hunch.

Our ability to reach effective judgments through making sense of the information is underpinned by the elements of effective review. These are:

the strength of our **relationships** in challenging and listening to one another
our ability to use the **evidence** to inform our practice
the extent to which we have a shared **vision** for our work
the commitment we share to **improvement**
our **ethical** awareness that contributes to everyone feeling safe
the **wisdom** we share in making sound judgments.

(See Section 3 for a discussion of these elements.)

As their review was initially concerned with collaborative practice, the members of Aratika Educare who were at the meeting were able to agree that there was not a shared understanding about communication between all members of the service. There were some surprises for everyone. For instance, some of the parents said they had not previously thought that they had the option of contributing to profiles in other ways, and they started to talk about using their home

videos and infant records.

While there was a reasonable level of satisfaction in general, there was more that could be done to improve communication between parents and teachers about children's learning.

Parents want more opportunities to communicate more specifically about their child's learning. The review indicated that the ways parents wish to communicate varies between the under-twos and the over-twos services. We can't assume that one size fits all.

Sometimes we identify other aspects of our practice that need consideration as a result of our making sense of the information that we have gathered. Alternatively, we discover that more evidence or careful scrutiny of all the information is needed before judgments about our practice can be made.

Aratika Educare recognised that the findings had implications for learning and teaching practice.

They recorded: We have to take more time to think about the learning that we make visible because it gives a message about the learning that we value. We also want to know that every child, regardless of their teacher, is receiving equitable assessment, particularly as we know that assessment is an integral part of learning.

Deciding - Te whiriwhiri

Deciding requires us to consider what we should do as a result of what we have learned about our practice and to act accordingly. It involves:

deciding on what needs to happen, based on our judgments
planning to implement and monitor any changes that arise
sharing the outcomes of our review.

How do we decide what to do next? - Me pehea to tatou whiriwhiri?

We are responsible for the decisions we make and the actions we subsequently take in review. Our decisions are informed by the judgments we have made. Knowing what we do well and what we need to improve, we can then plan to bring about improvement. As a result of review, we may have to do things differently, learn some new ways, or let go of practices we were comfortable with. We may develop some recommendations to guide us as we move forward or take immediate action.

Aratika Educare made the following decisions about their practice:

We are now aware of the need to find alternative methods of inviting parents to contribute in their own ways. We need to draw from profiles that emphasise effective learning and plan to emulate these across all profile entries from now on. This includes things like the use of reflective questions or blank pages for families, as well as shared video, rather than just templates for families to record onto or to attach photographs/artwork to.

It was agreed that there were some strong messages about information and consultation - both formal and informal.

It was a surprise to us that parents didn't always know that they could talk with us any time, and we also wanted to provide them with as much information as we could in both planned and responsive ways. We agreed that we needed

to be more aware of the differing communication needs of the parents of our younger children.

The Director added: We were also thinking about social opportunities for parents and felt that these were more important than we may already have realised. They are so important to our parents. How can we creatively provide for families in this way? How can we develop a teacher-planning mind set that ensures that social opportunities are planned for? This is likely to be the focus of our next review!

Through the review, we also learn about the effectiveness of our review process in helping to evaluate our practice. We have an opportunity to consider which aspects of our review process worked well and which need further development. These findings lead us to consider ways in which we can improve our future reviews:

Aratika Educare learned a great deal about the design of their survey and the way they asked questions of parents.

We realised that we hadn't asked any direct questions about the children's profiles in the survey, yet we felt this was important information for us to have. In saying that, a lot of parents commented positively about the profiles and others ticked that they were "highly pleased" with the information they received about their child and made no comment - so we don't know if that referred to the profiles, face-to-face interviews, or what. You only get answers to questions you ask in a scale like this!

Developing a plan for change - Te whakatakoto kaupapa

Developing a plan is an important aspect of review because it helps us transform our thinking into action. We act on decisions we have made. To do this, we have to come up with practical solutions that will address any issues raised through review and/or take us into another review.

We want to be sure that our resulting actions are both reasonable and practical. If there are resourcing or budget implications, we will need to explore these before we make plans that cannot be realised. In addition, we want to ensure that we identify the changes to practice that arise from the review and monitor these over time. Ultimately we are concerned to ensure that any changes that we make to practice have a positive impact on children and their learning.

Aratika Educare developed the following plan for change. A template of this plan is provided in Appendix 2.

Review focus

How effective are our communication and consultation processes with parents/whanau?

What did we learn?

That our profiles are not always consistent in the information they offer.
That our profiles do not provide sufficient scope for parent contributions.
That the profiles do not always highlight the most important aspects of learning.
That parents of under two-year-old children value highly a daily diary and that all parents have high expectations for information about their children's learning.
That we do not all share the same understanding about methods of consultation and communication.

What decisions did we make and why? What changes do we need to make to our practice?

For every child aged up to one year, there will be three-monthly formal meetings with parents.

That parents would like more social opportunities to talk to staff.

For children aged over one year, there will be six-monthly formal meetings with parents, with an additional meeting when the child moves from the under-twos centre to the over-twos centre. Additional opportunities will be made available for parents to meet with staff outside these times when parents give notice that they would like this to happen.

Together with parents, we will develop a pamphlet in which expectations are set out for all parties in terms of seeking information about the children's learning. Information sharing will take place in a range of settings from informal chats to the formal meetings outlined above.

We will develop clear standards for the depth of information and the frequency of recording that will apply to all children's profiles. We will develop these together, taking into account the results of our analysis. Each staff member will receive a copy of this standard, and the associated policy will be updated, too. Peer support will be established to help staff to develop profiles, and this support will be included in our professional development plans.

We will increase the prominence of the daily diary for children under two years old.

What will be the impact of these changes on people, processes, resources, or the environment?

There will be challenges for us all as we respond in increasingly diverse ways to families and share our collective knowledge accordingly. Staff will need to change their practice in relation to the profiles and arrange to make the best use of their non-contact time for this purpose. Release time will need to be provided for peer support and for preparing for, and taking part in, parent-teacher meetings. This will impact on our budget. There will also be implications for the staff roster.

How will these changes benefit children and their learning?

We anticipate that the increased forms of communication will impact positively on everyone because we will share the same understandings. Children's learning will be enhanced because we will have a wider repertoire of information to draw from in our assessment practices. Families will know that they can talk to staff, and there will be a greater degree of "continuity".

Who will be responsible for initiating the changes?

The review team and staff will draw up criteria for the profiles, based on what has been learned.

Teachers in the under-twos centre will present the diary records in a more prominent place and ensure that they are recorded in daily.

Management will update the policy and set up the parent-teacher meeting plan. They will provide increased teacher release time of thirty minutes per child per term to allow for meeting preparation.

Management will prepare the pamphlet in consultation with the review team.

What is the time frame for implementation?

The review plan will be implemented immediately and take up to six months to be fully actioned.

How will we monitor the impact of these changes?

A review of our learning and teaching practice is already planned this year as part of our biannual review plan. We will increase its profile and, with our increased understanding of sociocultural theory, ensure that parent communication is an integral part of any review of learning and teaching practice.

Ongoing monitoring of our plan helps us to know the impact of our actions on practice over time. We can do this by revisiting our plan at regular intervals to check that agreed actions have been taken. We may also want to undertake a subsequent review to find out the extent to which these changes are contributing to positive learning outcomes for children.

Sometimes, through review, we identify a need to make a change that is likely to have a significant impact on our service. This will require us to look at how we might manage this sort of change. It is important that we also recognise and celebrate our successes. Celebrating helps us to balance the challenges that come with change.

Aratika Educare reflected on their review:

We realised that teachers and parents in our services have so much to offer each other. We could have settled for 85 percent of our families being highly satisfied (as we found through our poorly designed survey), but this review took us to another level. Now we know that it is not so much about people being happy with the status quo but knowing that what we do makes a difference for learning. This is tough sometimes, but we were able to recognise and celebrate the ability of our learning community to work together to find this out!

Sharing the results of review - Te tuari i nga hua o te arohaehae

The nature of our review will determine who we share the outcomes of our review with and how. We ask:

Who do we need to share with?
What will we share?
When do we share our review findings?
How will we share our findings?

We consider the best ways of conveying the most important outcomes of the process. This will differ for each review. Some services have specific ways of sharing findings using templates, while others develop approaches that suit their particular context. For example, Aratika Educare chose to present their findings in the form of a booklet:

We look forward to sharing these results with everyone in the form of a booklet and also to implementing and reviewing our plans over the next six months. We know that we can't assume that our plans from the review will stay the same forever, and we want to keep improving so that we can be the best we can. Our parents are ready, willing, and able, and we're in a space where we can set that up together!

Some questions to think about - Hei whakaaro iho

What resources did we use to help us? How did the resources help us? Are there other resources that we could explore for next time?
How prepared were we? What more could we do to prepare next time?
What indicators did we access/develop, and how well did they help us to focus our review? Did we draw on them in our analysis?
Did we gather the most appropriate information? How could we develop our review process to support this?
What kind of analysis did we do and why? Is there another approach that we could consider that would provide a wider

perspective that we hadn't thought about?

How well did we draw on our analysis to inform our judgments?

To what extent does our evidence support our review findings?

What consideration did we give to sharing our decisions?

How will we plan for actions to take place as a result of our review?

How will we ensure that these actions take place?

Section 3: The elements of effective review

"Ko te rito te pū kāmehameha, awheawhe te pā ki tōna tauranga.

Nurturing the ritorito - the developing leaves at the heart - ensures the survival of the flax bush as a whole.

The pā, or the outer leaves, and other elements, such as soil, wind, and sun, together provide the ritorito with a sturdy foundation. Only the healthiest leaves are selected from the harakeke to weave a quality whāriki."

Like the impact of healthy harakeke on the quality of a weaving, there are key elements that contribute to the quality of review and its potential to transform practice. These elements offer a source of strength and insight, thereby increasing the effectiveness of review processes and the quality of our curriculum whāriki.

RARANGA

ra

energy, power, force, influence, strength, intensity, growth, generated by the sun

ara

direction, method, process, technique, approach, procedure, system

rara

be scattered, to have an effect, shoal of fish

ranga

weave, unite, merge, connect, bond, join together

anga

framework, support, structure, scaffold

ngā

plural, more than one, communal, shared, co-operation

In this section, we introduce six elements of effective review:

- **r** elationships
- **e** vidence
- **v** ision
- **i** mprovement
- **e** thics
- **w** isdom.

Relationships

"Ngā - plural, more than one, communal, shared co-operation.

The 'ngā' in raranga emphasises the importance of togetherness. It reminds us of the co-operative nature of learning. Strong relationships, based on respect, reciprocity, and trust, are essential to effective review."

The way we engage and involve others is central to the process and outcome of our review. The richness of diverse perspectives and views within each learning community has the potential to challenge current practice through review. It also provides opportunities to explore new and innovative approaches to practice.

Relationships are a source of learning, empowerment, and identity for all of us. This is reflected in the concept of whanaungatanga. Paul Hirini (1997) describes whanaungatanga as "a value, which reinforces the commitment whānau members have to each other" (page 44). Such commitment is expressed through a process of caring, sharing, respecting, helping, assisting, relieving, reciprocating, balancing, nurturing, and guardianship. Hirini goes on to suggest that involvement through whanaungatanga "generates observable behavioural processes through which whānau functioning is promoted and enhanced". Whakawhanaungatanga, building a collaborative learning community, establishes an environment of trust and reciprocity as an essential base for effective review.

Mason Durie's capacity framework is a way of exploring the strength of our relationships that contribute to effective review:

The **capacity to care** invites us to ask "How do we care for one another in review?"
The **capacity to share** is about looking at our review process and asking "How do we share the responsibility for review with everyone in our service?"
The **capacity for guardianship** invites us to ask "How effectively does our leadership in review reflect community aspirations, professional insights, the role of tangata whenua, and our collective priorities for children's learning?"
The **capacity to empower** is about looking at our expectations for involvement in review and the way we communicate these. Our question may be "What messages do we give to our community about their role in review?"
The **capacity to plan** ahead is concerned with the attention we are able to give to the future of our service, and the extent to which our aspirations are reflected in review. We could ask "How do we know that our service priorities are shared by everyone? What if they are not?"
The **capacity to promote culture** challenges us to understand, respect and acknowledge the cultural values and practices of our community. We could ask "In what ways do we promote culture through review?"

Central to whakawhanaungatanga is the way we treat others. In effective review, we take the time to draw together the ideas of all members of our learning community. We recognise that there is a wide range of information sources and ways of analysing information that have the potential to generate evidence in review and to assist us in making wise judgments about our practice.

Rita Walker (2003) highlights the importance of indigenous community members contributing to the generation of an effective curriculum as "more than just letting community members voice their concerns, more than just acknowledging diversity. The non-indigenous partners must listen with their hearts and not merely their ears."

Taking the time to listen and respond, rather than persuade and coerce others to see things in the same way as we do, enriches the effectiveness of review.

Evidence

"When the review process is shared, it builds everyone's capacity." - Education and care service

Ara - direction, method, process, technique, approach, procedure.

The "ara" in raranga emphasises the significance of procedures and systems in achieving, our goals. In the context of effective review, such procedures and systems are evident through systematic and robust approaches to preparing, gathering, making sense, and deciding. By rigorous analysis of relevant information, we generate evidence that we can draw on to inform the decisions we make and then make changes to our practice accordingly.

"We have developed a clear awareness of the need to gather a lot more information before coming to conclusions." - Kindergarten

Evidence is generated from the information we have analysed. Evidence informs the judgments we make about our practice. If asked "How do you know?", we should be able to show how we reached our judgments by drawing on our evidence. [You can read about the relationship between information and evidence in Section 2.]

In effective review, we generate evidence we can have confidence in.

Michael Eraut (2004) says that the process of generating evidence "is situated within the context, practices and thinking patterns of its creators" (page 91).

We can evaluate the quality of our evidence by questioning its validity and reliability:

Is our evidence valid? Is it based on sound information?
Is our evidence reliable? Would we generate the same outcome if we repeated the process?
Can we explain (to ourselves and others) how evidence enabled us to reach judgments in review?

By making review as transparent as possible through documenting the process as we go along, we are able to demonstrate to others what we have done and why. [You can read about the process of making sense of information and different approaches to analysis in Section 2.]

The following information helps us to consider different kinds of information as evidence and its likely value in informing

our judgments:

KINDS OF EVIDENCE	ONE-OFF OBSERVATIONS OR COMMENTS	INFORMATION GATHERED ON THE RUN OR THAT IS IN PROGRESS	EXTERNAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE THAT SUPPORT THE INFORMATION WE HAVE ANALYSED	CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE
Leading us to:	**Inspiration** Inspiration is a kind of information that may be a trigger for review but doesn't, in itself, provide sufficient evidence to make judgements about our practice.	**Hunch** A hunch is a kind of information that, again, may be a trigger for review or a source of information that contributes to a base of evidence to inform the review.	**Rational belief** When we have rational belief, different sources of information (including research evidence or evidence from external review processes) confirm, support or strengthen our analysis. However, on their own, they do not constitute evidence in review.	**Understanding** Understanding is information that enables us to state with confidence that our evidence represents "reality". This means that the information has undergone rigorous analysis and is reliable. As a result, we can make well-informed judgments about our practice.

The extent to which we use evidence to inform judgments and transform our practice is influenced by our commitment to making a difference to children and their learning through effective review.

Philippa Cordingley (2004) suggests that the potential of evidence to effectively inform practice will only be realised "through better listening to teachers, ensuring that they have a strong voice in figuring out the processes needed to make it work" (page 871).

In effective review, the voices of all members of our early childhood community contribute to the generation of evidence.

Vision

"Rā - energy, power, force, influence, strength, intensity, growth.

The "rā" in raranga refers to the energy and growth influenced by the sun. In effective review, energy is derived from the vision that each early childhood education service holds for children. Our vision therefore has the potential to both shape and be shaped by the process of review."

Vision can best be described as the overall design of our curriculum whāriki. Our shared vision for children sets out our aspirations for their achievement as learners. It describes:

what we value and why
what we are trying to achieve for children - both now and in their future.

Working towards our vision involves developing and setting goals that describe what we need to do to get there. When

we are clear about our goals, we can plan for them. These goals can inform our priorities for review and provide a starting place for developing indicators. In effective review, we regularly revisit our shared vision to check we are making improvements that are taking us in our agreed direction. We work together towards a unique design for our curriculum whāriki that truly reflects who we are, what we do, and how and why we do it.

In revisiting our shared vision through review, we want to ensure that everyone has had an opportunity to contribute their knowledge to the process. To achieve this, we return to our service philosophy.

Our service philosophy is influenced by a number of factors, including:

the beliefs and values engendered by our individual experiences of growing up
the principles and strands of Te Whāriki
the founding beliefs of our organisation
national and international research and theory
nationally and internationally agreed conventions (for example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Sometimes we are unaware of the impact of these factors on our practice. In effective review, we want to know that our beliefs, values, and assumptions about children are consistent with our practice. We consider the impact of our philosophy on our practice and how this influences children's learning. We can talk about:

the words we use to describe children and why
our hopes and dreams for children as they grow up
the way we interact with children through our practice
the extent to which our practices align with Te Whāriki and with relevant research describing quality education for children in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is critical to effective review that we discuss and debate our service philosophy so that we can develop a shared vision to guide our practice.

Anne Grey (1999) suggests that it is of utmost importance that this vision is "articulated, then owned by those who formed it" (page 126). She cites Bertacchi, who describes a vision as "a point of reference which can be re-visited regularly, especially in times of change or stress" (page 127).

Improvement

"The 'anga' in raranga refers to a framework, or scaffold. In effective review, we structure the process to maintain our overarching purpose of working together towards improvement. Effective review enables us to explore our practice critically and to consider how we might become even better through knowing what we do well and what we need to improve.

Throughout the process, we were moving back and forth between preparing and gathering and could go on doing that forever. It's very easy to forget that eventually you have an obligation to make sense of it all and to do something with that information!"

- Rudolf Steiner kindergarten

In effective review, we are always open to possibilities that there is more to learn about our practice. We seek to continually enhance our practice to provide relevant and meaningful learning opportunities for children. Review gives us a way of knowing what we do well and what needs to be improved in order to act on this knowledge. Our commitment to ongoing improvement contributes to the capacity of our learning community to determine its own direction and future. This is sometimes expressed as self-determination or tino rangatiratanga.

Knowing that the purpose of review is to improve our practice enables us to celebrate achievements and highlight aspects of practice for change. In doing so, we create an environment of enquiry in which we seek to acknowledge and act on areas for improvement rather than justify our practice through review.

Inevitably there will be challenges to face and change to manage when we engage in effective review that is underpinned by a commitment to improve our practice. The strength of our relationships will determine our ability to sustain these challenges and face change. Change is always easier to cope with when we have been part of the review process and especially when we are involved in the decision making. We can manage the changes together, knowing what led us to make decisions and why. We accept that there is more to learn and that we all play a part in building the capacity of our learning community to improve the quality of our curriculum whāriki for children. We embrace a culture of shared responsibility and critical reflection as we move forward together. We have a process that allows us to be confident in answering these questions:

What aspects of our practice are we doing well?
What aspects of our practice do we need to improve?
What do we need to do as a result of what we have learned about our practice?

Our answers are informed by evidence that we have generated through preparing, gathering, making sense, and deciding. Improvement that takes place as a result of effective review is based on judgments that we have made about our practice in order to be accountable to others and to reach higher standards of education for our children.

According to David Hopkins (2001), effective review is not determined merely by how much or how well we gather information: "There needs to be a commitment to scrutinize such data, to make sense of it, and to plan and act differently as a result." (page 101)

It is our commitment to making sense of the information and deciding what to do as a result of the evidence that impacts on the extent to which review can bring about improvement.

Ethics

> "Ranga - weave, unite, merge, connect, bond, join.

> The 'ranga' in raranga relates to the concept of joining together or bonding. In the context of review, it can remind us to weave together the process of preparing, gathering, making sense, and deciding with the people who make up our learning community. Being ethical in review requires us to consider the rights of everyone and to ensure that review considers the well being of all participants. At all times, we seek to ensure that everyone is safe."

Ethics are concerned with the care and attention we give to the people, and to the associated information that they have contributed to review. Effective review leaves everyone feeling heard and valued. We consider the implications of our actions on others, both now and in the future, by recognising our obligation to uphold their rights in all aspects of review.

It is important that everyone in the review process is treated with dignity and respect. The information we gather, the way we analyse the information, and what we find out as a result also need to be treated with the same care. The four fundamental principles for teachers that guide us to act ethically are justice, autonomy, responsible care, and truth (New Zealand Teachers' Council, 2004).

Acting ethically also requires us to consider the factors associated with the context-based relationships (Cullen, 2005) that comprise our learning community - culture, gender, age, ethnicity, community, and geographical location. These principles and relationship factors are important aspects of ethics, which make up one of the key elements of review.

PRINCIPLES	RELATIONSHIPS
Justice How are processes fair for everyone? Whose views get heard? Is there anyone not being head? Are processes transparent? Do we do what we say we will do? Whose permission do we seek?	**Culture** What is our service culture, and how does it influence the way we go about review? Are there aspects of power and privilege that we need to address in our relationships to support review?
Autonomy In what ways do we ensure that our process enables important issues to be raised? Who owns this information and why?	**Gender and Ages** How do we avoid making assumptions about who will be involved, based on gender or age?
Responsible care How do we avoid making assumptions about who will be involved, based on gender or age?	**Ethnicity** What do we know about each ethnic group in our service, and how do we work appropriately with each group? How do we ensure that the special rights of tangata whenua are upheld?
Truth How do we ensure that we gather, analyse, and report the outcomes of our review truthfully whilst doing no harm?	**Community** What are our unique relationship obligations within our local community and the various groups that we belong to?
	Geographical location What are the unique aspects of our location that might influence the way we go about review?

Wisdom

"Rara - be scattered, to have an effect, shoal of fish.

The 'rara' in raranga can be interpreted to mean 'to have an effect' or to shake things up. The effect that we are able to have on children's learning through review is greatly influenced by our ability to make wise judgments and act accordingly. In making wise judgments, we need to be able to look at our practice critically.

Throughout this process, we were always reflecting by working through the questions and thinking about what they mean and how they look from the child's perspective. We realised that there was no way that we could ever fully understand their perspective, but we would always endeavour to try."

- Rudolf Steiner kindergarten

When we engage in effective review, we draw on our combined wisdom.

Joy Goodfellow (2001) describes wisdom as "a way of knowing". She suggests that wisdom involves a combination of experience, knowledge, and action with these characteristics:

reasoning ability
an expression of concern for others
an ability to learn from ideas and environment
an ability to make sound judgments (moral issues)
the expeditious use of experience
intuition through which an ability to see through things, read between the lines, and interpret the environment is displayed.

In effective review, wisdom is achieved through reflection and reflexivity. These actions require a level of self-awareness coupled with an ability to share our discoveries with others in the learning community. Reflection and reflexivity allow us to scrutinise our practice honestly and openly, without blame.

Reflection enables us to see beyond the taken-for-granted ways of doing things and explore alternatives for our practice. Reflection supports us in developing an understanding of the way in which we make decisions and of the values and beliefs that underpin them. Becoming aware of how we make these decisions is a way of clarifying our thinking.

Reflection in review allows us to use what we know (sometimes called tacit knowledge) and what we find out through the process of review to discover new theories. These theories have the potential to influence and challenge our practice. In this way, reflection opens up possibilities and opportunities to change and improve. We can look critically at ourselves in the light of what we learn about our practice.

Reflexivity is described by John Quicke (2000) as the way "organizations 'turn around' upon themselves, critically examine their rationales and values and, if necessary, deliberately reorder or reinvent their identities and structures" (pages 299–230).

Reflexivity reminds us that knowledge is located within a context and is therefore never free from bias.

Reflexivity in review enables us to suspend our judgments by accepting the fact that there are many ways of knowing and coming to know. We can then respond to different kinds of information coming from a range of perspectives. Rather than dismissing these insights because they are different from our commonly held beliefs, we explore them through the process of preparing, gathering, making sense, and deciding.

Reflecting deeply requires three increasingly challenging processes:

Reflection-in-action:

Thinking "on your feet" and responding "on the spot".

Reflection-on-action:
Examining what happened by asking others, questioning ourselves, and reading different theories about it. At this point, we begin to critically examine ourselves.[5]

Reflection-on-action:

Developing new theories and consolidating, adapting, or changing practice as a result.

Margaret Carr (2004) suggests that, in reflection, we are "expecting to be surprised, and prepared to change our minds" (page 45). In this way, reflection can be viewed as a disposition to enquire and not give up. We remain open to possibilities amidst the challenge! By being openly reflexive, we have the opportunity to discover new insights about ourselves, our practice, and our human condition. We can make the most astounding discoveries at the most unlikely times because we are focused on making meaning rather than being proven "right".

[5] The first two processes are adapted from Schön, 1983.

Conclusion

Some questions to think about - Hei whakaaro iho

How do our relationships contribute to and strengthen our review process and outcomes?

What is the quality of our evidence? How do we use evidence to inform and transform our practice?

How valid and reliable is our evidence?

What opportunities does review give us to share and debate our personal philosophies?

What does our service philosophy say about our image of children as learners?

How well does our shared vision for children reflect our beliefs, values, and attitudes?

What is the link between our vision and goals and the priorities we establish in review?

What opportunities do we have to revisit our vision as a result of review?

To what extent does review improve our practice? What is the impact on children's learning?

How well do we manage change in our service? What are the challenges we face?

What strategies do we have for overcoming these challenges?

How well do we work together? Who gets to have a say in review? How often do children, families, and members of our wider community contribute to review?

Do we feel safe? How do we ensure that we behave ethically in review?

How does our collective wisdom contribute to effective review?

How reflexive and reflective are we in review? How do we know?

To what extent are we able to critically reflect on our evidence in order to make sound judgments in review?

Conclusion - Whakamutanga

Te Whāriki suggests that we, as members of our early childhood education service, belong to a community of weavers. Review involves us in a process of raranga as we systematically look back, check, and refine our whāriki for children. Raranga brings to mind feelings of unity and togetherness, weaving together children, their families, whānau, and communities into the life of our early childhood education service. Raranga reminds us that we are weaving together a curriculum that has at its core our best intentions for children.

When we take the time to pause and look back critically at our practice, we are making sure that what we do matches

up with what we set out to achieve for children. As a result, we have the opportunity to transform our practice, based on strong evidence and sound judgments.

Review therefore involves us in:

Preparing: being clear about what we are wanting to find out
Gathering: collecting information that helps us to find out
Making sense: analysing that information and generating evidence
Deciding: making judgments, deciding what to do as a result, and acting accordingly.

Through the process of effective review, our practice has the potential to be transformed. Children are the ultimate beneficiaries of such transformation because their learning is enhanced as a result. Effective review allows us to be more confident that the curriculum whāriki we weave for children is robust and strong and that we have a clear design to work with in the future together.

Appendix 1: Review Stories

Five early childhood education services outline their review stories in a variety of ways. They focus on a range of aspects of practice.

A rural playcentre

A rural playcentre asks "To what extent are we equipping our playcentre members to be fully involved?"

Our AGM was fast approaching, and some of us were feeling uneasy that a core group of people were taking responsibility for most of the jobs. We were concerned that those people were at risk of burning out and that others were unaware of the requirements of being a Playcentre parent.

We looked at our mission statement, which said, "Parents should manage and govern the centre co-operatively", and we asked ourselves, "What would co-operative processes look like if they were happening at a high level?"

We decided we wanted to find out "To what extent are we equipping Playcentre members to be fully involved?"

We decided that over the next two weeks, we would:

audit the enrolment process - including any oral or written information that is offered both from our centre and the Playcentre Association
talk to other Playcentres about how they convey expectations
survey our parents.

Gathering was completed by different members of our team. Auditing the enrolment process involved recording all the steps in the welcoming process for new families that took place over three sessions with the information officer. All oral and written information given to new parents about our expectations for the involvement of parents in the Playcentre was also recorded.

Our president talked with other Playcentres. She discussed options with the Association and other centres, and she collected examples of contracts used in other centres.

We developed the survey questions carefully at our next meeting. We wanted to make sure that the questions were helpful — that they gave us the information we needed and didn't request extraneous information.

We asked:

Why did you choose Playcentre for your child?
What is expected from you at Playcentre?
What do you think the minimum requirements for Playcentre members should be?
How does Playcentre accommodate your unique skills, strengths, interests, and needs?

When the information was brought back to the larger meeting, there was a great deal of discussion. We were pleased to discover the extent of parents' enthusiasm about their involvement, and we realised that we already had a lot of information available for parents as a result. However, when we looked at some of the comments that parents had made, it was evident that the issues weren't clear-cut. We used an adaptation of Rogoff's (2003) Transformation of Participation diagram (see Appendix 2: Focuses of Analysis template) to explore some of the issues that our information raised.

ASPECT OF ANALYSIS	INDIVIDUAL	INTERPERSONAL	CULTURAL/INSTITUTIONAL
Parent-help roster	The Playcentre Association has a philosophy based on emergent leadership and parents playing an active role in their children's learning. We have an expectation that all parents attend planning sessions. Some parents, however, often didn't identify attendance as a requirement for these sessions. Others felt that their lack of contribution led to frustration for those who were actively involved on this level.	Our president advised that several Playcentres were now using agreements (contracts) reached at enrolment. These were reported to be very successful. The survey responses revealed that parents had created good relationships with other Playcentre members at Playcentre sessions. They identified a strong sense of belonging and fulfilled their parent-help responsibilities with great enthusiasm. As a result, they felt that they had wonderful interactions with the children.	We realised that these parents were very much part of the children's extended Playcentre experience. They communicated socially with other parents in the weekends or by email. We asked ourselves how we could support the needs of our unique community while being fair to everyone. When we looked at the roles our parents played outside the formal planning sessions, we realised that many of our parents who were reluctant to attend planning sessions were doing wonderful things elsewhere - there was the management of the finances, the funds raised by various individuals, the building being kept in pristine condition, the working bees, the shopping that got done, and the library that was so well organised.

We asked ourselves if it was realistic and fair to expect all families to contribute in the same manner, given their different strengths, interests, and circumstances. We also asked whether parent participation had to be at the level of working during the session and wondered if other areas could be considered. |

We surprised ourselves by the shift in our thinking as we worked through this process. Up to that point, it was generally agreed that as members of our Playcentre, we were expecting everyone to be involved at all levels of teaching and learning as well as management and governance. By looking at the issue from a range of perspectives that were unique to our community, we realised that what we expected was not always realistic or perhaps even necessary to achieving our goals.

Through our many discussions, we concluded that lots of things were going really well in relation to our enrolment process and parent involvement. We looked back at our review focus and decided that the enrolment process fully equipped our parents to be involved, but this review had exposed so much more.

We recognised the value of the different ways people can contribute and how important it was for us to avoid being too rigid in our requests. We started to see that although our vision stated that "Parents are respected, valued, and supported", our practices might not respect and value parents' strengths and interests. We demanded so much from them from the outset. We started to think that we might need to divide some of the tasks across our community so that people could do the things that they enjoyed. We decided that we would trial a contract that parents would complete at enrolment and that we would provide a range of contributions for families to choose from.

PRACTICES YOU COULD HELP WITH	WHAT YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO DO AND ANY ADDITIONAL TALENTS OR SKILLS THAT YOU COULD OFFER
The way we foster learning	Playcentre training Parent help on the roster What else?
The way we work together	Working bees Maintenance Tidying up at the end of sessions What else?
The way we manage this Playcentre	Attend meetings What else?

We realised that circumstances are not the same for all families and recognised that people have different capabilities. We applied this understanding to the new commitment form.

We also recognised the importance of discussions as well as written material. This applied not only to commitments to participate in our Playcentre but also to our developing a strong communal sense of belonging. As a result, we planned to hold social events. We developed a statement to help us to remember the things we value, and this is on the wall of our Playcentre.

We also decided that having self-review on the agenda for every meeting from now on will keep us on track. Our meetings can be consumed with "business", so this item allows us to focus on the things that really matter to us all. The process of reflecting individually and as a group is very empowering. Engaging in the process of self-review in a deliberate way was the beginning of creating a community of reflective practice and recording our progress. There's always more to learn.

A Rudolf Steiner kindergarten

A Rudolf Steiner kindergarten asks, "How do we express our vision to families so that they can make informed choices?"

This spontaneous review was prompted by a five-year-old leaving our service to go to another school. The departure of this child created a ripple effect with other families, as parents started to doubt the benefits of their child staying at Steiner kindergarten until the age of six and then moving into the Steiner school.

We discussed the issue at a board meeting. One of the parent representatives explained how hard it was to resist the pressure of other families in the area and the belief that "real" learning occurred only at school.

Our director suggested that this issue could be linked to our service's vision for each child. She wondered if perhaps we were not taking sufficient time to explain this vision and how it is realised through the Steiner environment. For example, she reminded everyone of the Steiner realms of thought:

Thinking - Clarity
Feeling - Inwardness
Willing - Perseverance

She wondered if parents realised that Steiner philosophy advocated learning that followed a holistic process from kindergarten through to secondary education.

The discussion that ensued led us to formulate a review focus that asked:

"How do we express our vision to families so that they can make informed choices about their children's education?"

We decided that to answer this question, we would need to look at the issue from the perspectives of both management and parents. Were the messages we thought we were giving the same messages that parents were receiving?

We decided that it would be important to find out by talking with parents, looking back over our communications, and talking with management. We chose the following methods:

A focus group of parents (we invited a group of first-time parents of four-year-old children), facilitated by an independent person. We chose to invite a colleague who worked in management outside the kindergarten and who had experience in focus group interviewing.
Management would list all the communications we made available. A partner of one of the parents on the board offered to lead this part of the review at our next meeting so that the Director could be part of the process. This was agreed.

We prepared a budget for this work, which we decided would take place over the next three months. By the end of that time, we would meet with everyone to decide what to do as a result of the review.

The focus group took place a month later. This required some organisation, such as finding the best time, ensuring that everyone understood the process, and working with the facilitator. Management did not attend the focus group, and all fifteen of our kindergarten families with first children aged four years were invited to attend. Out of fifteen, twelve were able to attend - an ideal number for a focus group. Food was provided, and other parents offered to provide care for children if it was required. Two families enthusiastically accepted this offer.

The facilitator, in consultation with management, determined questions to prompt discussion. These were intended to provoke rather than drive discussion (as it was recognised that the focus group might choose to take a different

direction). The questions were:

What factors contributed to your choice of childcare?
What makes this place right for your child right now?
What factors are likely to inform your choice about primary school education? What will you be thinking about when you make that decision?
In what ways, if any, does the vision of this service impact on your decision making - either now or in the past?

Responses were recorded by audiotaping the focus group. No names were given, and all responses were anonymous.

In preparation for the next management meeting, we were charged with the task of locating and listing all the documentation and archives that we had in relation to the focus. The next meeting, a month later, revealed a wide range of documentation about "expressing our vision" (evident in such things as our policy documents, our charter, and our management portfolio). However, the only evidence of this vision being conveyed to parents was in our strategic plan, our revised charter, and our enrolment pamphlet. Through discussion, we realised that in the enrolment process, we made an assumption that parents knew about the vision.

Focus group results:

The majority of parents chose this service as their preferred choice for reasons including staffing ratios, the teachers, the Steiner philosophy and, in three cases, location.

All parents said that the fact that their child was happy and was learning a lot gave them a great deal of confidence in their choice. They talked at length about the importance to them of their child seeing themselves as a learner and of parents feeling that they too were part of the learning process.

Parents indicated that their decisions about primary education were influenced by factors that ranged from location and friendships to a desire for the child to be involved in learning to read and write. Two parents were clear about their intentions to have their children continue in the Steiner school as they were very aware of what was happening across the Steiner service. Both these parents had friends whose children had gone on to the Steiner school and were doing very well. Five parents spoke about the pressure they felt to have their child succeed with literacy and their fears that their child would be left behind educationally if they stayed at kindergarten until aged six. The factors that affected their decisions about primary school were quite different from their reasons for selecting a kindergarten. Parents conveyed some anxiety about the choices they had to make and were keen to make the right one for their child.

Four parents asked what the vision of the service was as they had not been aware of it at all, let alone been influenced by it in their decision making. Two parents (the same two who had already decided to send their children to the Steiner school) said that the vision had played a significant role in their decision making and was something they referred to in discussions with teachers about their children's learning. The remaining six parents said that they were aware of the vision but that it did not feature highly in their reasons for choosing a Steiner kindergarten.

They were influenced by other factors. Several parents decided that it might be interesting to compare the vision of each school in the area before making a final choice about their children's primary schooling. Others felt that the vision was too "ethereal" for them to take account of it when making practical decisions.

A Johari Window (see Appendix 2) helped us to analyse all our findings. Through this process, we were able to summarise everything we had learned and to recognise potential blind spots in our knowledge.

It was clear that management and parents did not always share the same understanding of our vision or reasons for their choice of service. We now knew that our vision was not always accessible to everyone but, for some of those who were aware of it, it was highly significant in their decision making. For others it did not feature at all. This prompted us to decide on several new initiatives.

We decided to rewrite our vision in plain language so that everyone could see its practical relevance and the connection to Steiner philosophy. We would make this the focus of our next review.
Enrolment processes would involve a clear verbal explanation of the revised vision statement for this service as well as of the Steiner philosophy.
Advertising material in the newspaper and radio would include a reference to the revised vision statement for the service and ensure that there was emphasis on the whole education process rather than just on the kindergarten.
Teachers would ensure that a discussion of our service's vision would become part of their parent interview meetings.

Review reminded us that we need to value what we do and also to value the importance of communication.

A home-based service

A home-based service asks "How effective are our planning and assessment practices in promoting learning?" - A learning story approach.

We were aware that the learning story approach to assessment was being used increasingly throughout other parts of the early childhood education sector. We wanted to find out more about it and decided to look at what assessment was already happening in each home base before we took on this new approach. We looked at our assessment goals, which included the following statement:

"Educators provide each child with opportunities for learning that are based on the individual strengths of the child."

We decided to explore how well we were doing this. Firstly we planned for our co-ordinators to make this a priority on their visits to educators - both as a discussion point and to invite educators to explore their assessment practice. This would be supported by weekly discussions between co-ordinators. We also planned to hold an educators' workshop in three months' time to which everyone would bring their thoughts about current assessment practices, informed by their prior discussions.

During this time, we shared readings and circulated copies of Kei Tua o te Pae: Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars around the network. Co-ordinators collected examples of assessment records and shared ideas with educators and with one another. They recorded the differences between what was written in the assessments and what was actually happening as articulated by the educators.

One of the co-ordinators worked with an educator to record the following learning story, in handwritten form.

Monday 27th June

You're back!

On Monday morning, Henry woke late and came into the lounge saying "Are my friends here yet?" Lucas beamed when he saw Henry come into the room. Henry went up to Lucas and said, "I have missed you." The boys had a big cuddle.

What's happening here?

Henry had just had a week off. He had missed his friends and was anxious to see them. Henry was able to articulate this as he came into the room and as he told Lucas he had missed him. (Communication)

Lucas beamed at Henry and was clearly pleased to be back. The secure relationship that has been built was evident in the pleasure and delight they showed when greeting each other. (Well-being, Belonging)

The discussion that took place at our workshop three months later showed us that many of the wonderful things that were happening for children simply weren't reflected in the written material. We recognised that educators could "talk" the language of *Te Whāriki* but that this was not always evident in the assessment records.

When we looked at the learning story that had been written, everyone was extremely positive, saying "I could do that!" and "This makes it real." Someone asked the question "How do you know that Lucas was delighted to see Henry?" as the photo didn't seem to demonstrate this. As a result, we started to get a lot more critical about the way we described learning and what we recognised as learning. The learning story became a prompt for our discussions about the learning that we recognised and valued.

Together we completed a SWOT analysis (see Appendix 2) to help us explore the pros and cons of learning stories. We ended up being a little more cautious about jumping in "boots and all".

The consensus from the group was that the current documentation was not working. Moreover, there was a new way of thinking about assessment that we wanted to know more about!

We concluded our workshop with a plan for moving forward. We decided that educators and co-ordinators would spend the next three months writing learning stories together and sharing digital cameras to record learning. We would then analyse these using the Child's Questions framework (see Appendix 2).

Management sent out a newsletter to families to families explaining what we were trying, and we began another review to see if it would work. We also planned to access professional development so that we could learn more about this new way of working and how we could deepen our understanding and appreciation of assessment.

A Tokelauan education and care service

A Tokelauan education and care service asks "How effectively are we communicating policy?"

We are a Pasifika education and care service that started as a Tokelauan language nest five years ago and has since become licensed and chartered - with lots of learning along the way!

Staff were concerned about children who were consistently being picked up late at the end of the day as this had a spin-off effect in terms of staffing ratios for licensing requirements. Staff brought this issue to the committee, who looked at their policy on the collection of children.

We discussed the policy and decided that it needed to be reviewed. The policy included a penalty clause: "If you are late and do not ring, you will incur a penalty late fee of $20.00". This surprised us as we had not been applying this penalty clause. The committee realised that it needed to bring this issue to the attention of everyone in the community

(including the committee members, who had also been picking their children up late on occasion!). So we planned to increase parent awareness of this policy by placing it on a noticeboard for two weeks with a comment sheet attached.

The noticeboard comment sheet remained empty for the two-week period. We found, however, that it prompted a great deal of discussion about the penalty between teachers, parents, and the committee members. This was mainly about the advantages and disadvantages of the penalty and the impact it could have on families. Staff made notes about these discussions in their daily diary. Names were not recorded - only the content of the discussion was included.

The diary notes were read out at the next committee meeting. Overwhelmingly, the responses indicated that the community had not been aware of the policy or of the penalty. Most of the responses described a lack of awareness both of the need to ring if late and of the implications of lateness on staffing requirements. This was largely because families hadn't read the policy. We realised that as a number of our policies are written in Tokelauan, some of our families are unable to read them. Not all our families are Tokelauan. We have a wide range of ethnic groups, including African families, now attending the centre. This communication problem surprised us as we had not thought about the changing dynamics of our community and the implications of this since our beginnings in 2001.

Our diary recordings showed that families didn't object to paying the penalty, just that they didn't know about it. We realised that this wasn't fair. We asked ourselves, "If they don't know, why should they pay?" However, we had to consider who would pay for the extra staffing required and where we would find the additional staff to be on call. By asking these questions, we realised that we had a real issue to resolve.

The results showed clearly that families were unaware of centre policy and of the expectations held by centre staff. Management agreed that until the information was accessible to everyone, we could not impose the penalty payment. We decided to obtain signed confirmation from each family - so that we could be sure the information was understood for the future.

We realised that we need to review our policies and procedures on a regular basis. We recognised that they all have a purpose and are important for the day-to-day running of the centre. As a result, we decided to translate all our policies and procedures into English and to set up a regular reviewing cycle.

Here it is:

We found that when we used both languages, we got much better review feedback (including written feedback in both English and Tokelauan). As well, and most importantly, the policies and procedures came alive for everyone.

While looking through our policies and procedures, we also realised that, conversely, our philosophy statement was in English and hadn't been reviewed for four years. We started a new review that took us into an exploration of our philosophy and how it shines through in our vision for the many cultures in our service. We also looked at the languages we use while maintaining our Tokelauan character, and our vision for children. This indicated to us the importance of language that is meaningful to all families in our service. We realised too, through all of this, the importance of integrating our Tokelauan values with Ministry requirements.

Ko te Matiti Tokelau Akoga kamata he akoga Tokelau e whakavae i te aganuku ma te lotu, auala mai i na takutukuga a Matiti Tokelau Akoga kamata ma te Ministry of Education.

Our philosophy statement now reads like this:

A kindergarten

A kindergarten asks "To what extent does our entranceway reflect the cultural heritage of this community?"

The parents at our kindergarten had recently completed a term evaluation of our programme. Among other things, a few parent responses indicated that there was some congestion occurring at the main doorway that serves as the entrance and exit of the kindergarten.

During this time, the teaching staff had been involved in professional development that assisted our centre to implement bicultural practices in our programme. Teachers had learned that this included the everyday things that occurred in the environment as much as celebrating significant cultural events.

Looking at our entranceway through this bicultural-practice lens, we planned a review that asked: "To what extent does our entranceway reflect our bicultural heritage?"

The review involved our teachers, in consultation with our parent committee members.

We decided to ask whānau and local iwi about the history of the area. (Our committee president facilitated this.) We also decided to use the information we had from our term evaluations as a prompt for discussion. As well, over the next term, we took every opportunity to discuss the children's perspectives on the entranceway with them. (Teachers undertook to record this information.)

Over the term, our discussions with children took place in groups and with individuals informally. When children were changing, putting their shoes away, or getting their lunchboxes, we took the opportunity to ask them about the most appropriate places for putting their things. These were considered in relation to what we now understood to be appropriate bicultural practice, such as separating hats and shoes from food. Feedback was shared at each staff meeting and summarised for analysis.

Local iwi and whānau sourced information about the local legends for us. We learned about a local legend of the three whales that we in turn shared with the children through story, drama, and art experiences. Whānau invited children, teachers, and families to visit their property in a location where the mountains that represent the three whales are visible. A grandmother shared her stories about the significance of the property and its situation. We also visited our local marae, where the significance of the legend of the three whales and its relationship to the kindergarten were shared with the children and families/whānau. Over time, the legend was revisited often, and it soon became both significant and relevant to us all.

During this time, we also looked more closely at our evaluation forms. Where comments had been made about the entranceway, these comments mentioned the fact that the lockers were right in the doorway and that the doorway was both an exit and an entrance. Although not many parents had made such comments, we felt that this may have been due to the fact that the questions we had asked were not sufficiently probing. Therefore, we could not dismiss this issue.

At our end-of-term committee meeting, we presented the summarised information that we had gathered.

We had developed an understanding of the significance of the legend of the three whales to our cultural heritage. We

considered how we could represent this legend as one that we felt belonged to us all and that we honoured. Our local iwi endorsed our ideas.

Many different images of whales were represented in our kindergarten throughout this time. Children were dramatising and representing images of whales in their artwork and storytelling. Children had made three images out of hardboard that they asked to be hung in the entranceway. This provoked a great deal of interest from parents and children alike.

Our parent evaluations suggested to us that we needed to create a less congested entranceway and that this could be achieved by clearing more space and making it more attractive. This was reinforced by the comments provided by the children, who had some very clear ideas about how they wanted the area to look. Children also made suggestions about relocating lockers and their belongings in ways that would respond to our concern to separate hats, shoes, and food.

We decided to relocate our lockers and purchase baskets for hats, shoes, and lunchboxes to ensure that they were kept separate from one another. We planned to review the outcome of this change in six months' time.

Together, we determined that we would develop a mosaic of the three whales and have this in our entranceway instead of the lockers. We approached a student artist we knew and asked if she could develop a representation of the three whales. She agreed to this, and we had it made into a mosaic feature on the floor of our entrance. The intention is that it will always remain in this place, our place, and that it may provoke people entering our environment to learn more about the significance of the three whales represented in the mosaic. The legend itself is also written and displayed for parent and whānau information. The image of the three whales was later depicted as a watermark on written material in the kindergarten.

Appendix 2: Planning templates

The planning templates below are provided for teachers to use for teaching purposes.

Planned review schedule

Time frame:	annual	biannual	triannual

Our shared vision:

Our goals/focuses for review over this period	Links to legislative requirements	Key practices	Time Frame

Our shared vision:

Our goals/focuses for review over this period	Links to legislative requirements	Key practices	Time Frame

Meeting accountabilities
(for example, safety, health, revision of policies, and so on that are not covered above):

Review plan

What is our review focus?

What indicators will we use?

Who will be involved?

How long will we take?

When will we start?

What will we gather?

What resources will we use?

How will we document our review?

Plan for change

REVIEW FOCUS:	
What did we learn?	
What decisions did we make and why? What changes do we need to make to our practice?	
What will be the impact of these changes on people, processes, resources, or the environment?	
How will these changes benefit children and their learning?	

REVIEW FOCUS:	
Who will be responsible for initiating the changes?	
What is the time frame for implementation?	
How will we monitor the impact of these changes?	

Focuses of Analysis

Focus of analysis [6]

ASPECT(S) OF ANALYSIS	INDIVIDUAL	INTERPERSONAL	CULTURAL/INSTITUTIONAL
	What do we know is happening for the individual in relation to our review focus?	What aspects of our review focus do we know are influenced by others in our setting and associated settings?)	What aspects of our review focus are influenced by features such as the environment, the wider context of our early childhood service, our philosophy, the knowledge that influences what we do, processes such as planning and so on — all of which impact on the individual learner?

[6] adapted from Rogoff, 2003, pages 52–62.

Child's questions

Review focus: [7]

CHILD'S QUESTION (EXAMPLES)	WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING AS ADULTS?	WHAT DOES OUR INFORMATION TELL US ABOUT WHAT WE ACTUALLY DO?	WHAT CHANGES DO WE NEED TO MAKE TO OUR PRACTICE AS A RESULT?
How do you appreciate and understand my interests and abilities and those of my family?			
Do you meet my daily needs with care and consideration?			
How do you engage my mind, offer challenges, and extend my world?			

CHILD'S QUESTION (EXAMPLES)	WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING AS ADULTS?	WHAT DOES OUR INFORMATION TELL US ABOUT WHAT WE ACTUALLY DO?	WHAT CHANGES DO WE NEED TO MAKE TO OUR PRACTICE AS A RESULT?
How do you invite me to listen, communicate, and respond?			
How do you encourage and facilitate my endeavours to be part of a group?			

[7] adapted from Carr, May, and Podmore, 1998

Johari window

Review focus [8]

OPEN	HIDDEN
What do we all think we know about the focus of our review? What information is transparent and clear?	What information did we gather that was previously unknown to some and not to others? What knowledge is still hidden or inaccessible to some?

KNOWN	BLIND
What new knowledge does this information shed on the focus of our review?	What information might we remain blind to and why? Are there clues in our information that we could follow up on to gain clarity?

[8] adapted from Luft, 1969

SWOT analysis

Review focus: [9]

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
What did we do really well in relation to our review focus and associated indicators?	What didn't we do so well in relation to our review focus and associated indicators? Why?

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
What are the potential opportunities this information offers us to improve our practice?	What are some potential risks or dangers to children, adults, and our service if we carry on in the same way? What are some risks or dangers if we don't?

[9] adapted from Learned, Christiansen, Andrews, and Guth, 1969.

Glossary and references

Glossary - He kupu whakamārama

In English

analysis - the interpretation (making sense) of information in order to generate evidence that will inform judgments

appraisal - the evaluation of performance

assessment - the practice of observing children's learning (noticing), seeking to understand it (recognising), and acting on this understanding (responding)[10]

conceptual approach - an approach to analysis that interprets the information in relation to key ideas, theories, or frameworks

community of learners - a community made up of children, families, whānau, teachers, and others who have common learning goals

criteria - principles or standards by which something can be decided or judged

curriculum - the sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, that occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development

descriptive approach - an approach to analysis that involves looking for themes, patterns, or contradictions or seeking out predetermined categories

evaluation - the process of using evidence to form a judgment about how well goals are being met, in order to make decisions about change

evidence - information that has been analysed and, as a result, informs the judgments that are made in review

focus - an area of practice that is targeted for review, usually expressed as a question or statement

indicator - a statement that outlines the desired practice or outcome

judgment - a decision or opinion made on the basis of evidence

numerical approach - an approach to analysis that involves counting, comparing, or interpreting different sets of figures or ideas

policy - a rule, course, or principle of action adopted by an early childhood education service regarding particular aspects of practice; a policy should be consistent with the shared vision of that service

portfolio - (also called profile) a collection of observations that form a profile documenting a child's learning over time

review priority - an aspect of practice that is regarded as the most important focus for a review

reflection - the act of looking beyond the taken-for-granted ways of doing things and exploring alternatives for practice

reflexivity - the act of suspending judgments by accepting the fact that there are many ways of knowing and coming to know

vision - a statement that sets out a service's aspirations for children as learners

In te reo Māori

ako - reciprocal processes of learning

arohaehae - to critically discern

kaupapa - an agenda, a way of doing things, a plan

kaiako - a teacher

raranga - a weaving technique that involves overlapping strands or fibres (six root words are also explored in section 3)

takapa - a mat that is spread out on the floor

tino rangatiratanga - self-determination or the ability to determine one's own destiny

whakatauākī - sayings that each have many meanings rather than a direct translation

whanaungatanga - a value that reinforces the commitment of a group

whānau - a family or group of people who are connected in some way

In Sāmoan

'ie toga - a fine mat

papa laufala - an everyday mat

[10] Adapted from Drummond, 1993, in Kei Tua o te Pae, Book 1.

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