

Early Childhood Education National Industry Advisory Group Hui Minutes

15 April 2025



Minutes –Early Childhood Education National Industry Advisory Group Hui (kanohi ki te kanohi)

Date, Time and Location:	15 04 2025 at 09:00-15:30, 49 Tory Street L 1, Wellington, Te Whanganui-a-Tara
Chair:	Sarah Williams, National Engagement Manager, Toitū te Waiora
Advisory Group Members:	<p>Bonnie Te Ara Henare, Principal Consultant & Managing Director of Aho Education & International Consultancy Ltd. Senior Education Advisor Early Learning, Ministry of Education</p> <p>Graeme Severinsen, Academic Leader Undergraduate and Graduate Programmes (ECE), Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand</p> <p>Zane McCarthy, Teacher/ECE sector representative on National Executive, Campus Creche Trust/NZEI Te Riu Roa</p> <p>Fiapaipai Casserley, He Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens</p> <p>Logan Warwick, Registered Kaiako, Kids In The View Early Learning</p> <p>Alice Ingram, Curriculum and Learner Experience Writer, Whānau Āwhina Plunket</p> <p>Kara Daly, Pedagogical Lead, Playcentre Aotearoa</p> <p>Simon Laube, Chief Executive, Early Childhood Council</p> <p>Elizabeth Polley, Senior Academic Staff Member, Open Polytechnic/Te Pūkenga</p> <p>Jesseallen Te Awhe-Raston, Tiamana (Chairman), Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngaio</p>
Secretariat:	Tamar Anstice, National Engagement Project Coordinator, Toitū te Waiora
Attendees:	<p>Sean McKinley, Chief Executive, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Mark Ormsby, Poumatua, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Amanda Kent, General Manager Strategy and Advice, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Lois Moran, Quality Assurance Manager, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Hone Manu, Team Administrator, Toitū te Waiora</p>
Apologies:	Cathy Wilson, Kaiwhakahaere Matua, Montessori Aotearoa NZ

Summarised Minutes- Early Childhood Education Update and Discussion

Commentary:

Understanding Frontline Needs

- Need better understanding of frontline challenges to support ākonga (learners) more effectively.
- Strong interest in Level 2 and 3 qualifications and how to encourage participation in secondary schools.

Workforce Recognition and Development

- Support for unqualified/unregulated workforce to receive formal recognition.
- Scholarships and qualifications seen as vital.
- Government needs to invest in training teachers for example paying teachers to train to grow the workforce
- Concern raised around current policy that penalises providers for having highly qualified staff, due to regulatory and funding constraints.

Regulation and Policy Concerns

- Anticipation of the impact of the upcoming **ECE Regulation Review**.
- Concern about political influence and a potential return to "tick-box" compliance models.
- Concerns raised against rigid compliance models that affect funding and may lead to closures.
- Need for teacher, whānau, and community voices to be heard.

Curriculum and Cultural Relevance

- Recommendations needed to influence curriculum direction.
- Emphasis on collaboration with whānau and celebrating cultural identity in ECE.
- Recognition of disparities between well-resourced and under-resourced services.

Kohanga Reo Challenges

- Commitment to the kaupapa of Kohanga Reo despite low pay.
- Frustration around inability to hire deeply knowledgeable individuals who have no formal qualifications.
- Staff retention linked strongly to cultural and kaupapa-based motivations.

Summarised Minutes- Early Childhood Education Update and Discussion

- Pay parity remains a key barrier to workforce sustainability.

Funding and Professional Development (PD)

- MOE funding seen as unresponsive and PD opportunities are limited and costly.
- Need for more accessible, flexible, and sector-specific PD.
- Suggest staggered placements to ease pressure on centres.
- Interest in international partnerships to fill workforce gaps.

Student and Learner Support

- Placement challenges highlighted (e.g., unpaid placements, inflexible work policies).
- Financial and systemic barriers causing student attrition.
- Call for a more flexible, supportive model that addresses learner needs.

Skill Gaps Identified

- **Language & Cultural:** Te Reo Māori, Pacific languages, general multilingual skills, cultural safety.
- **Learning Needs:** Understanding behavioural and additional learning needs, trauma-informed practice, neurodiversity.
- **Professional Competencies:** Positive guidance, active supervision, child protection, emotional regulation, social competency.
- **Mental Health:** Support for whānau and tamariki, maternal mental health.
- **Training & Career Progression:** Gaps in training for unqualified workers, lack of refresher courses, mentoring for new teachers.
- **Inclusion:** Cultural and neurodiverse inclusion lacking across many services.

Sector Challenges

- Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff.

Summarised Minutes- Early Childhood Education Update and Discussion

- "Job hopping" and employer pressure on endorsements and sign-offs.
- Students financially struggling to complete qualifications.
- Poor employment practices and exploitative conditions for migrants.
- Lack of relievers and gaps in trauma-informed training and learning support.
- Rising cost of living impacting Māori and Pacific teacher training retention.

Key Messages & Sector Needs

- Sector sentiment: **"We just want to survive."**
- Recognition of ECE's role in shaping lifelong outcomes, especially in the first 1,000 days of a child's life.
- The need for:
 - **Improved ratios**
 - **Pay parity**
 - **Safe, healthy working conditions**
 - **Mentorship for new kaiako**
 - **Professional development for kaiako working in ECE**
 - **Investment in training ECE kaiako from government**
- Advocacy for more visible investment and marketing for ECE to attract and retain talent.

Actions:

1. Early Childhood Education Update and Discussion	
Reference #	20250415/01
Presenters:	Hera Williams
Commentary:	Hera set an action for the members to talk with their stakeholders about the current trends and challenges identified within the meeting and to come back to the next hui in June 2025 with possible solutions.
Actions:	NIAG members are to talk with their stakeholders about the current trends and challenges identified within the meeting and to come back to the next hui in June 2025 with possible solutions

2. Meeting close	
Reference #	20250415/02
Commentary:	Hera asked the group what their most convenient dates would be to have our three subsequent online hui. The dates were discussed and decided on by the rest of the group.
Decisions:	<p>Agreed subsequent hui dates and times are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wednesday 11th June 2025 (10 am- 12 pm) - Monday 14th July 2025 (9:30 am - 12:30 pm) - Tuesday 21st October 2025 (9 am- 1 pm) <p>The group also agreed that if another hui was needed, we would agree on a time and date for that to happen.</p>
Actions:	Tamar to send through the dates to all members so that they have the meetings in their diaries. Members will be updated with an agenda and any pre-readings that need to be reviewed two weeks before the hui date so that they are all prepared for discussions.