

The Learning Centre Ltd Education Review

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1 Evaluation of the Service

How well placed is the service to promote positive outcomes for children?

The Learning Centre promotes positive outcomes for children within the context of the centre's philosophy.

Context

The Learning Centre operates in a renovated villa in Ponsonby, providing a relaxed, homely environment. Children are cared for in five small groups: the He Kakano room for infants to 18 months and the Weka room for children from 18 months until 2.5 years. Older children are divided into three broad groups. The philosophies of Madga Gerber, Dr Emmi Pikler and RIE (Resources for Infant Educators) underpin programmes, routines for care and the respectful approaches teachers use with children.

Features of the service include high adult to child ratios. Children are cared for in small groups. Almost all staff are registered teachers and most have specific training in the centre's philosophies. Teachers are supported to engage in ongoing professional development and they share a commitment to enhancing their knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori.

Since the 2009 ERO review the licensee and teachers have upgraded the outdoor environment, rearranged some of the indoor spaces and continued to develop centre resources. In 2012 the service began implementing 'continuity of care'; an approach that enables children to remain with a key caregiver until they are 30 months old. Over time it is planned that caregivers will follow children through all five age groups in the centre.

The Review Findings

Centre leaders and teachers establish very positive relationships with children and their families. They know children well and encourage parents to become familiar with the centre philosophy and theories behind teachers' practices. The recently introduced 'continuity of care' approach supports teachers' strong belief in attachment theory and the importance of primary caregivers. Respectful routines, peaceful environments and small group numbers contribute to children's sense of wellbeing and belonging.

Older children move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments with good access to creative materials, physically active play and experiences that integrate early literacy, numeracy and science learning. They work confidently in small groups, exploring ideas together and supporting each other with learning tasks and during routines. They are articulate and view themselves as capable learners.

In accordance with the centre's philosophy the focus for infants and toddlers is on allowing their physical development to occur at an unhurried, self-initiated pace. Adults provide specific respectful support during routines. At other times they encourage independent exploration with a selection of resources. As part of the centre's self review of 'continuity of care' and the resulting change in age grouping, centre leaders are looking at the resources and programme provided for children in the Weka room.

Teachers continue to develop strategies for planning programmes. Teachers in each group are guided by children's strengths and interests as they plan activities and resources. They consider their roles as adults in the programme and are beginning to track how well they respond to children's dispositions as learners. Teachers plan carefully for children's transitions between groups. As they further develop practices, teachers could enhance the range of learning experiences included in children's assessment portfolios and focus their programme evaluations on the effectiveness of learning experiences and teaching strategies.

Teachers are reflective practitioners who frequently participate in professional development and set meaningful goals to improve their practices. Senior teachers provide a very supportive mentoring programme for the large number of provisionally registered teachers and lead training in the centre's philosophy. They value parents' opinions.

The centre is well led and managed. As centre leaders prepare for relicensing under the new regulations they are revising strategic and annual plans, and strengthening links between these documents. They are also improving the quality of self-review processes.

Centre leaders have identified, and ERO agrees, that the centre's next steps for development should include:

- ongoing improvement to self-review processes to enhance documentation, clarify agreed decisions and evaluate the impact of actions
- continued strengthening of the centre's bicultural curriculum with a focus on strategies for the success of Māori learners
- ongoing development to embed and critique the continuity of care practices, especially in relation to the provision for toddlers to achieve exploration goals

- continuing to refine and enhance processes for programme planning, assessment and evaluation.

The Purpose of an ERO Report

Education reviews in early childhood services focus on the factors that contribute to positive outcomes for children. We work with early childhood services to identify their strengths and the areas they need to review and develop. Early childhood services take part in the review process and are expected to make use of the findings to enhance children's learning and wellbeing.

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2 Legal Requirements

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the management of The Learning Centre Ltd completed an ERO Centre Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal obligations related to:

- administration
- health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- financial and property management.

During the review, ERO looked at the service's systems for managing the following areas that have a potentially high impact on children's wellbeing:

- emotional safety (including positive guidance and child protection)
- physical safety (including supervision; sleep procedures; accidents; medication; hygiene; excursion policies and procedures)
- suitable staffing (including qualification levels; police vetting; teacher registration; ratios)
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.

3 Next Review

When is ERO likely to review the early childhood service again?

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Dale Bailey
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region

31 January 2013

Information about the Early Childhood Service

Location	Ponsonby, Auckland		
Ministry of Education profile number	25335		
Licence type	All Day Education and Care Service		
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1998		
Number licensed for	50 children, including up to 20 aged under 2 years		
Service roll	56		
Gender composition	Girls 34 Boys 22		
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	45	
	Māori	2	
	Chinese	2	
	others	7	
Percentage of qualified teachers	80% +		
Reported ratios of staff to children	Under 2	1:4	Exceeds minimum requirements
	Over 2	1:4	Exceeds minimum requirements
Review team on site	November 2012		
Date of this report	31 January 2013		
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	October 2009	

General Information about Early Childhood Reviews

About ERO Reviews

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the New Zealand government department that reviews schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

Review focus

ERO's education reviews in early childhood services focus on the factors that contribute to positive learning outcomes for children. ERO evaluates how well placed the service is to make and sustain improvements for the benefit of all children at the service. To reach these findings ERO considers:

- Pou Whakahaere – how the service determines its vision, philosophy and direction to ensure positive outcomes for children
- Pou Ārahi – how leadership is enacted to enhance positive outcomes for children
- Mātauranga – whose knowledge is valued and how the curriculum is designed to achieve positive outcomes for children
- Tikanga whakaako – how approaches to teaching and learning respond to diversity and support positive outcomes for children.

Within these areas ERO considers the effectiveness of self review and partnerships with parents and whānau.

Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of service performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to the service.