



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

The Learning Centre Ltd
Ponsonby, Auckland

Confirmed

Education Review Report

The Learning Centre Ltd

Ponsonby, Auckland

12 October 2016

1 Evaluation of The Learning Centre Ltd

How well placed is The Learning Centre Ltd to promote positive learning outcomes for children?

Not well placed	Requires further development	Well placed	Very well placed
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ERO's findings that support this overall judgement are summarised below.

Background

The Learning Centre Ltd is a family-owned and operated early childhood centre that provides full day education and care for children from four months to five years of age. It operates in a renovated villa in Ponsonby and has a spacious outdoor environment. The centre is adjacent to a local park. Teachers use the park as part of supporting children's understanding of the natural world, and for centre events.

Children are able to attend the centre for full or part-days to accommodate the high number of siblings attending together. Children are catered for in small, age differentiated groups. There are good opportunities for children to play together for long periods during the day. Ratios of staff to children are maintained at above required levels. The centre caters for a majority of European/Pākehā children and their families.

The centre owners and staff are committed to upholding the principles of Resources for Infant Educators (RIE). This set of principles provide a philosophical approach that prioritises respect for the individuality of children within a nurturing and caring environment. The centre is led by a small leadership team of qualified teachers. They share responsibility for the support of other teachers, and the smooth operation of the centre.

ERO's 2013 review of the centre identified many positive aspects of practice. These included positive relationships, good opportunities for younger children's physical development and teachers' reflective practice. The report highlighted that the centre's areas for development were to improve self-review processes, strengthen bicultural practice and enhance the programme planning cycle. The centre has continued embedding the positive practices listed above and strengthening the areas for further development.

The Review Findings

Children and their families are welcomed into the centre with quiet warmth. To help children settle, they have a key teacher with whom they form a strong bond. This practice makes families feel more comfortable and assured that their children will settle and enjoy their time at the centre.

Relationships between children and teachers are trusting, strong and nurturing. Teachers skilfully and deliberately encourage children to be confident leading their own learning in the programme. This respectful approach is supported through the calm and attentive conversations that teachers have with children.

Teachers have initiated and embedded a strong focus on integrating *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, into the daily programme whilst maintaining the integrity of the RIE principles. This has led to a rethink and revision of many of the routines and practices that were formerly in place in the centre. As a result, teachers and children are having more frequent and meaningful conversations during play. This enhances children's learning and enjoyment of the programme.

Children are able to make choices from, and explore, a range of activities and experiences. They have long periods of uninterrupted play. Children are invited to take snack breaks to eat when they are ready during the day. These snack times and mealtimes are pleasant and relaxed. The centre provides nourishing midday meals for children with a focus on healthy eating.

Environments encourage children's physical and imaginative play. Infants and toddlers have opportunities to climb, scramble and explore as part of their play. The older children have access to an interesting and challenging playground and a covered deck for activities and play. Teachers foster creativity by providing a wide selection of play and craft materials. Children's early literacy and mathematical understanding is also well supported through play.

Although there are only a small number of children with Māori heritage in the centre, teachers are aware of the need to provide opportunities for all children to learn about New Zealand's dual cultural heritage. Teachers are investigating ways to develop a stronger understanding of te ao Māori. Children with diverse needs are sensitively integrated into programmes and well supported to make developmental progress.

The centre's evaluation processes are robust and effective. Management of the centre is efficient and teachers and families are closely involved in decision-making and planning for the future. Staff appraisal processes and strategic and annual planning are linked to professional development for teachers. Teachers' own reflections and discussions enhance learning programmes.

Key Next Steps

ERO and management agree that the next steps for the centre are to continue to:

- strengthen bicultural and curriculum practices
- use evaluation to guide improvements
- include children's ideas and perspectives (children's voice) more deliberately in centre processes.

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and 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:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management and administration.

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.

Next ERO Review

When is ERO likely to review the service again?

The next ERO review of The Learning Centre Ltd will be in four years.



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

12 October 2016

The Purpose of ERO Reports

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the government department that, as part of its work, reviews early childhood services throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. ERO's reports provide information for parents and communities about each service's strengths and next steps for development. ERO's bicultural evaluation framework Ngā Pou Here is described in [SECTION 3](#) of this report. Early childhood services are partners in the review process and are expected to make use of the review findings to enhance children's wellbeing and learning.

2 Information about the Early Childhood Service

Location	Ponsonby, Auckland		
Ministry of Education profile number	25335		
Licence type	Education & Care Service		
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008		
Number licensed for	50 children, including up to 20 aged under 2		
Service roll	54		
Gender composition	Girls	35	
	Boys	19	
Ethnic composition	Māori		1
	Pākehā		46
	other		7
Percentage of qualified teachers 0-49% 50-79% 80%+ <i>Based on funding rates</i>	80% +		
Reported ratios of staff to children	Under 2	1:4	Better than minimum requirements
	Over 2	1:8	Better than minimum requirements
Review team on site	August 2016		
Date of this report	12 October 2016		
Most recent ERO report(s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Education Review		January 2013
	Education Review		October 2009

3 General Information about Early Childhood Reviews

ERO's Evaluation Framework

ERO's overarching question for an early childhood education review is 'How well placed is this service to promote positive learning outcomes for children?' ERO focuses on the following factors as described in the bicultural framework [Ngā Pou Here](#):

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 *arotake* – self review and of *whanaungatanga* – partnerships with parents and whānau.

ERO evaluates how well placed a service is to sustain good practice and make ongoing improvements for the benefit of all children at the service.

A focus for the government is that all children, especially priority learners, have an opportunity to benefit from quality early childhood education. ERO will report on how well each service promotes positive outcomes for all children, with a focus on children who are Māori, Pacific, have diverse needs, and are up to the age of two.

For more information about the framework and Ngā Pou Here refer to [ERO's Approach to Review in Early Childhood Services](#).

ERO's Overall Judgement and Next Review

The overall judgement that ERO makes and the timing of the next review will depend on how well placed a service is to promote positive learning outcomes for children. The categories are:

- Very well placed – The next ERO review in four years
- Well placed – The next ERO review in three years
- Requires further development – The next ERO review within two years
- Not well placed - The next ERO review in consultation with the Ministry of Education

ERO has developed criteria for each category. These are available on [ERO's website](#).

Review Coverage

ERO reviews are tailored to each service's context and performance, within the overarching review framework. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to the service.