

Ministry of Education-funded *Better Start Literacy Approach* Microcredential FAQs

When will the funding be available?

Professional learning support will be available in 2021 through the University of Canterbury Child Well-being Research Institute's world-leading microcredential model. The Ministry of Education support will be available to Literacy specialists and Year 0/1 teachers.

In February, 2021, the Ministry of Education funded 120 places for literacy specialists and 360 places for teachers to participate in the first cohort of BSLA training. In early May, applications for funding for Semester 2 will be open through the Ministry of Education's PLD funding portal.

What are the *Better Start Literacy Approach* microcredentials and what does the funding cover?

The *Better Start Literacy Approach* researchers are using the University of Canterbury microcredential system to support the training of Facilitators, class teachers and Teacher Aides/Learning Assistants (available Semester 2) in implementing the *Better Start Literacy Approach*.

There are three separate micro credential courses:

A microcredential course for Facilitators of the *Better Start Literacy Approach*

This course is specifically designed for specialists in children's literacy and language development, such as Resource Teachers for Literacy, Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour, Speech-Language Therapists or across-school literacy leaders. The course is aimed at developing facilitators' skills in supporting class teachers to implement the *Better Start Literacy Approach*. The course includes a focus on supporting children who may have additional challenges to their learning to succeed in their early literacy attempts.

The funding for facilitators covers:

- Microcredential fee (valued at \$2500)
- Reasonable travel and accommodation costs to Christchurch **or** Auckland for 2-day workshop
- Resource kete
- Access to all online resources, lesson plans, game activities, assessments, data analysis and reporting

A microcredential course for class teachers

This course prepares teachers to implement the *Better Start Literacy Approach* within their teaching context. It includes access to all the online assessment and teaching materials including resources and lesson plans. This microcredential also includes explicit teaching of how to use the Ready to Read – Phonics Plus readers in small group reading.

The funding for teachers covers:

- Microcredential fee (valued at \$750)
- 2 x days of teacher release
- Resource kete
- Access to all online resources, lesson plans, game activities, assessments, data analysis and reporting
- One semester of coaching and mentoring from a BSLA Facilitator

A microcredential course for Teacher Aides

This course, available in Semester 2, 2021, is specifically designed to support Teacher Aides to assist teachers in the implementation of the *Better Start Literacy Approach*. It includes a focus on implementing assessment and supporting children with additional learning needs. Undertaking this microcredential is not part of the Ministry of Education professional learning package, but would provide excellent support to the class teachers implementing the BSLA, and is an outstanding professional learning opportunity for teacher aides.

When are the workshops for Facilitators?

As part of their training, Facilitators will be required to attend **one** live-in 2-day workshop in either Christchurch or Auckland. The workshop dates for Facilitators are as follows:

Semester Two Workshop Dates

- Christchurch: July 29th and 30th, 2021
- Auckland: August 2nd and 3rd, 2021

What is the time commitment?

For Facilitators

It takes one semester (2 school terms or 20 teaching weeks) to complete the BSLA Facilitator microcredential. Within that semester, there are four phases of time commitment:

- Initial training – working through microcredential training and face to face workshop with research team (approximately 20 hours)
- Working with teachers on Tier 1 implementation – meeting and training with teachers, whānau workshop and periodic support in the classroom over 10 week intervention period (approximately 25 hours over 12 weeks)
- Planning and supporting Tier 2 implementation – differing models of support vary from 5 – 20 hours over 10 weeks)
- Celebration of results and other flexible engagements with microcredential content and research team – (up to 20 hours over 20 weeks depending on level of engagement needed with research team)

For Teachers

It takes one semester (2 school terms or 20 teaching weeks) to complete the BSLA Teacher microcredential. The time commitment for teachers focuses around implementing the learning from the self-directed, online learning modules into classroom practice and engagement with your BSLA facilitator. We recommend about 6 hours of time is allocated to engaging with the online learning, as well as another 6-10 hours over the course of the semester to work with a partnered facilitator on planning and implementation of the approach. The majority of this time will be covered by the two days of teacher release that comes with the funding. The implementation of the *Better Start Literacy Approach* in Tier 1 (first 10 weeks) in the classroom involves around 30 minutes 4 x a week for large group teaching, as well as small group reading instruction.

Am I required to undertake formal assessment in the microcredential?

These microcredentials are not like university courses where formal essays or lengthy written assignments may be required. Short quiz-style activities/assessments are built into the microcredential learning content to check content knowledge. Self-evaluation of learning will be included. The self-evaluation will include evidence from analysis of children's progress through children's online monitoring assessment data as well as feedback from whānau and others.

The *Better Start Literacy Approach* microcredentials will include a short case study report.

What happens after I've completed the microcredential?

Once the microcredentials are completed, you will be ready to continue implementing the *Better Start Literacy Approach* in your school (as a teacher) or leading this change in your community (as a BSLA Facilitator) independently. Trained Facilitators who are funded through the MoE will be expected to support up to 6 new teachers per semester to implement the *Better Start Literacy Approach*.

Completing the microcredentials gives you access to the online resources and assessment tools for up to 2 years. After that time, a modest subscription fee will be charged, as a contribution towards maintenance and improvement of the resources and website.