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ECE Participation Programme Evaluation

Delivery of ECE Participation Initiatives: Stage 2

Report to the Ministry of Education

Linda Mitchell, Patricia Meagher-Lundberg, Toia Caulcutt, Maretta Taylor, Sarah Archard, Helena Kara, and Vanessa Paki

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Report commissioned by
Ministry of Education

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Within the Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research, Maretta Taylor undertook coding and data capture as well as being a member of the research team. Bronwen Cowie was a member of the EWG (with authors of this report) and provided critical feedback, and Margaret Drummond undertook formatting of the instruments and report.

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Executive summary

This report is from the second stage of an evaluation of the Ministry of Education's (MOE) ECE Participation Programme. The overall evaluation explores how the Participation Programme and individual initiatives addressed barriers to participation in early childhood education (ECE) for target groups and communities. The focus of this report is on how initiatives' responsiveness to families and participating communities has enabled them to overcome barriers to participation. The evaluation is being led by an Evaluation Working Group of Ministry of Education and University of Waikato staff.

In this Stage 2, data was collected from seven sources:

- MOE data on enrolments;
- interviews with MOE staff;
- a survey of all participation initiative providers;
- interviews with providers from a sample of each type of initiative;
- focus group discussions with MOE staff and community representatives in areas in which an Intensive Community Participation Project (ICPP) had started: Kaikohe, Waitakere, Tamaki in Stages 1 and 2, and Hastings in Stage 2 only;
- a survey of families engaged in the initiatives; and
- interviews with families from three of the initiatives: Supported Playgroups (SP), Engaging Priority Families (EPF), Flexible and Responsive Home-based Solutions (FRHB).

Family responsiveness

Responsiveness to family aspirations and needs

Parental survey and interview data indicates that the initiative families are predominantly of Māori and Pasifika ethnicity, mainly low income, and accessing income assistance, especially the Domestic Purposes Benefits and Family Support. Almost half of the parents surveyed had no school leaving qualifications. On the whole, it appears that the initiatives are reaching the intended families.

Every parent spoke of wanting their child to be happy, to live well, to "have a good life". Many parents wanted their child to develop in their own unique way according to their strengths. All parents regarded education as a key to a good life. In early childhood education, a common parental aspiration was for their children to learn to interact and communicate with others, make friends, be respectful and considerate. A range of curriculum areas were mentioned as being important in early childhood education, i.e., reading, writing, counting, singing, dancing, and drawing. A main focus was parents wanting their child to be literate and numerate.

Providers with strong community connections used their understanding and local networks to find out about needs and recruit families. It was through discussion and personal relationships that providers found out about aspirations and needs of families, rather than any formal or written information. EPF providers often helped families address basic needs for health, housing, and income support before discussing ECE and what families wanted for their tamariki.

ICPPs address the needs of families by taking a community development approach rather than pre-arranged solutions. These projects have planned innovative new services located where the families live, built networks of collaboration with ECE services, community and government agencies and families, and thereby tailored solutions to family aspirations and needs. Community consultation occurred before new TAP-funded ECE services were established.

Parental satisfaction with ECE provision

The parents whom we surveyed and interviewed were using the initiatives offered and so we did not find out about unmet need from parents not involved in the initiatives. With this proviso, overall, the barriers to ECE participation reported in Stage 1 of cost and personal barriers, such as not knowing how to enrol, were largely being addressed, either through ECE service provision (TAP, SP and FRHB), the provider finding a suitable service (EPF), making public the range of ECE services in a community (ICPP), or supporting a service to become more responsive (ILCCE). Most parents wanted to be geographically close to an ECE service but in some communities they were limited in their choice. This was said to be due to limited provision generally, ECE services with long waiting lists, limited types of ECE services for family needs and requirements, and ECE services which were not responsive to families with high support needs.

From parents' viewpoints, with the exception of home-based, the initiatives have been successful in matching family needs to provision. Home-based was not the preferred choice for some parents who had wanted a parenting programme for themselves, although it did suit some other families. Providers also spoke of wanting their coordinator to support to parents as well as home-based educators.

Some additional barriers to participation emerged in Stage 2, as well as the prevalent barriers of cost, transport and locally available ECE. Providers and parents said that it was essential to establish trusting relationships with key people in order for parents to feel comfortable in the 'new' ECE environment. Parents talked about difficulties they had passing over the care of their children to another person and the importance of trusting that person or feeling comfortable in the ECE environment. All providers talked about relationship building as essential to building trust. SP providers accommodated their playgroups to the needs of different parent groups in order to provide a familiar and therefore safe environment. Building trust was said to take a long time. ICPP publicised ECE services in their communities through play days to help generate understanding and build connections.

Providers reported the high needs of some families as a barrier to participation in ECE, and reported that these needs generally had to be addressed in some way before families could attend ECE services. They noted that it was essential they were able to broker support for families. Providers, particularly EPF providers, said that the intensive nature of the programme and the length of time they worked with families meant they had the time to address families' needs, often engaging other social services such as Housing New Zealand, WINZ and CYF to deal with things such as housing, finances and social issues. In addition developing a trusting relationship with families helped providers to find out about and so address different issues. ICPP developed and coordinated collaborative networks of ECE services, government and community organisations and families that enabled families to access wider support.

We did not have evidence of whether parents' aspirations had been met for their children for "a good life" and "to follow their dreams", but many parents spoke of their child's happiness at being in ECE. If programmes offered are high quality then we would expect children to develop learning dispositions and in a range of learning areas of importance to parents (e.g., literacy, music). Some SP parents expressed some concerns that could be linked to quality. Seven percent of those surveyed and interviewed wanted a permanent building so that they did not have to

pack up every day, could leave children's work on walls and could help generate a sense of playgroup belonging. They also expressed a need for improved children's equipment and resources. A few (four parents) recommended that staff be qualified and have better pay, and one also recommended ongoing professional development. Twelve percent of parents recommended transport be provided.

Parental involvement in early learning in ECE

All initiatives support families to enrol their children in ECE in some form, but there is some variability in the extent to which they support engagement with ECE and with children's learning and development.

As was intended in its design, SP seems to be most effective in encouraging engagement of families. SP families participated in the programme and acted on ideas for activities and resources to use at home. This seemed to happen through the families watching others and being encouraged to participate themselves. SP parents were encouraged to learn not only about their child's learning and development and the role they could play but also to pursue their own continued learning, such as a playgroup mum who was learning te reo, reading and writing from the SP provider. We did not have an opportunity to assess the quality of advice and support offered.

The engagement of EPF and TAP families with ECE traversed a broad spectrum and was dependent on the people in the ECE service where the child was enrolled, whether the parent brought the child to the service or transport was provided, and the efforts made by EPF providers and ECE services to broker connections. Providing transport might help ensure the child attended ECE, but could hamper parents from being involved if deliberate efforts are not made to invite participation. Some providers were using people (teachers as van drivers) and portfolios to connect families with ECE services that their child attended. However, many of the EPF parents interviewed do not have regular ongoing contact within the centre, and may have only been in the service to enrol their child. They do not engage with the centre on a regular basis.

Most FRHB parents knew their FRHB educator and made connections with home. But there were differences in ways in which these parents were engaged in their child's learning and development that seemed to be a function of the opportunities offered by coordinators, their relationship with the family, and their professional expertise.

Responding to needs for quality

Quality in ECE from parents' perspectives can take on very different forms depending on the family and what is important to them at the time. For families, the idea of quality did not necessarily relate to the education of the child, but more to how the provider or service was helping the family.

Overall, the most commonly mentioned feature of quality was the environment. Comments ranged from the appearance of the service, being decorated in bright colours and with examples of children's work, having indoor and outdoor play areas, to more fundamental concerns as to safety and cleanliness. Feeling welcome, safe and happy were expressed. The second most commonly mentioned feature was the resources and activities. Thirdly, the interpersonal relationships of staff were important features of quality for parents. Teaching and learning—being able to see their children learning and developing from the experiences they were getting through ECE—were important. Additional to this were comments around social skills, learning to play, and adjustments to behaviour and development.

Most providers indicated aspects such as if the child is happy, there is food, and the child is excited about attending as basic indicators of quality that parents would be able to identify. Some talked about qualifications but one warned that sometimes (particularly with EPF and TAP initiatives) going too deep with parents about the intricacies of child development theory hinders the relationship development. Most providers felt that staff needed to be qualified, and have significant experience and understand how to engage with diverse families. This

included the type of language used, the warmth of the individual, the approachableness of the staff and a general ability to engage with parents and family from all walks of life. Some providers also indicated that how clean the environment was would be an indicator to look for as well and how new the resources were.

Stage 2 interview questions and parent survey data has only touched on views of quality. The spectrum of understanding around what is quality varies depending upon experience, engagement and individual background and initiative.

Responding to language and culture

Families' needs regarding responsiveness to language and culture differed significantly across the initiatives. These differences can be described best as a spectrum that reflect their choices of early childhood provision, reveal their ideas and understandings regarding their language and culture, and also echo their perspectives on the importance and inclusion of language and culture in education.

Some families (particularly EPF) were somewhat alienated from their language, culture and identity. Some of these whānau are third generation urban situated and have limited understanding of their extended whānau, hapū and iwi. Provider interviews indicated that many of these whānau have had negative experiences in their own education with regards to language, culture and identity and have taken the position of maintaining language and culture at home rather than in an educational setting.

Parents often chose a playgroup because language and culture were significant to the playgroup context. This factor is particularly prevalent for Pasifika families where language, culture, religion and family connectedness were significant influences on enrolment and participation. Within these playgroups, members were often encouraged and informed of the playgroup through word of mouth from extended family members within their community groups such as church. Extended family group community connections have also influenced their participation and ideas around the importance of education. Within playgroup settings parents also indicated that there is a sense of community that encourages intergenerational relationships. These are significant for both Pasifika and Māori cultural identity. This sense of community identity has, in some settings, developed opportunities for members to grow new relationships and maintain unique cultural values associated with cultural capital.

There were mixed responses with regards to some initiatives' connections with the home environment and cultural capital of families. Supported playgroups in Pasifika communities have offered the opportunity for families to extend their regular community relationships into early childhood education in a setting that provides a familiar cultural fabric and has enabled these families to engage comfortably. The familiarity of the cultural capital and fabric at home is evident in the playgroup context. This is also reflected in Kaupapa Māori playgroups where a whānau setting where younger and older siblings attending side by side reflected the tuakana–teina reciprocal learning model that reflects their home environment.

Other participation initiatives have had less obvious connectedness between centre and home environments. Provider interviews for the Identity, Language and Culture (ILCC) initiative where centres receive support to be responsive to their community have indicated that there have been improvements in centre understanding as to the importance of culture, language and identity. Providers indicate that centres and their staff have made shifts on the cultural competence continuum that has enabled them collectively to develop a clearer picture of cultural practices.

Home-based initiative provider interviews indicate that they are still developing ideas around cultural competence and how the family home cultural capital can be incorporated into the initiative.

The most successful examples in regards to identity, language and culture suggest that when there is a close connection between the home culture and ECE service culture, families positively echoed a sense of belonging and ownership. This sense of engagement empowers parents to feel they are significant to the service itself and that the cultural fabric of home has a place in early childhood.

Community responsiveness

Inclusion of community perspectives during set-up and decisions about provision

The MOE valued and drew on community knowledge in designing the Participation Programme initiatives, selecting providers and implementing provision. MOE staff drew on their community knowledge to choose initiatives suitable for particular communities and that matched the needs of families. Supported playgroups work well in engaging with communities, particularly where language and culture are significant values. Two initiatives, ICPP and TAP 3, most lend themselves to finding innovative solutions and being directly responsive to communities since the nature and shape of the initiative is not predetermined. Some MOE staff and providers expressed a strong view that having an ICPP and community planning process in every community would be ideal.

Selection of providers

Providers were selected by the MOE on the basis they were a 'good fit' with the community and had capacity to deliver the initiative. Two characteristics of providers helped them to be responsive to the community. One was having related or relevant experience working in the community. This enabled providers to understand family needs, draw on already established family support networks, and hold a good idea of what might work in a particular community and what support systems might need to be put in place. Secondly, having understanding and experience in delivering an initiative was beneficial.

Implementation in a community responsive way

Characteristics of providers and of particular initiatives seemed to help build community networks and responsiveness. Where a provider held more than one initiative, knowledge and resources from one were able to be used in others. EPF had most contact with external agencies and played a brokering role in supporting families. Supported playgroups that were located in a school, church or marae were able to build close links with their wider co-located community. Other providers reinforced the importance of community connection.

ECE enrolments through Initiatives

MOE data shows the enrolments for Māori and Pasifika children and children from low income communities in ECE over the first two years of the programme have increased considerably from the first year. Child enrolments in ECE through initiatives as of December 2012 were 2246 compared with 845 in the first year. The 2012 figure is well on the way of achieving the original aims of the programme for 3500 children to be enrolled in ECE by 2014. As part of the Better Public Services goals, the Government set four actions for the Ministry of Social Development (as lead agency), the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to support vulnerable children in the next three to five years. These included a new target that in 2016, 98% of children starting school will have participated in quality ECE, an increase of 3.3 percent from 2011 (New Zealand Government, 2011). The Ministry of Education has estimated that to achieve this target there is a need to enrol an additional 3,000 children each year until 2016 (this estimate is based on current population projections—actual numbers are subject to change). This is on top of the growth already predicted to take place over the same period.

Enrolments were highest in four initiatives: EPF, SP, ILCCE and TAP.

Table 1: Overall enrolments in ECE from six ECE participation initiatives in 2011 and 2012

Initiative	Enrolments at December 2011*	Enrolments at December 2012
EPF	390	814
SP	444	663
ILCCE	88	354
ICPP	7**	106
HB1	4**	46
TAP	0***	294
Total****	845	2,246

Note: Includes children currently enrolled; excludes those who have transitioned to school or another ECE, children who have exited the programme, and children registered in EPF but not yet enrolled in an ECE service.

* *These totals differ from those in the baseline report, as the MOE has revised its data collection processes, and is getting more accurate data from providers (including corrections to historical data).*

** *These numbers are very low because these two initiatives, ICPP and HB, had just started in 2011.*

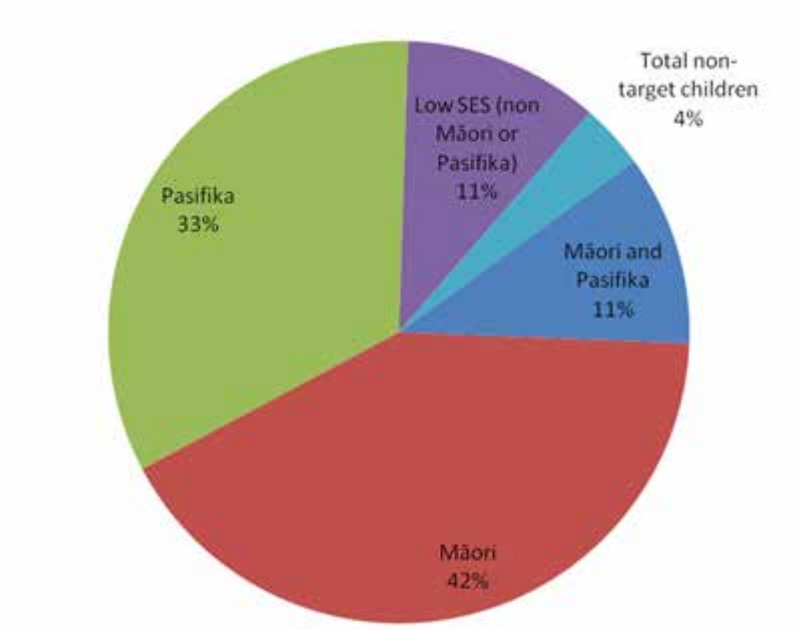
*** *No TAP projects were operating at December 2011.*

**** *Children are counted in each initiative through which they participated in ECE. Therefore, the number of children in the 'Total' column will generally be less than the sum of the students in each initiative.*

ICPP, FRHB and TAP showed the biggest percentage increase in enrolments, but they had few or no enrolments in 2011. The TAP building projects begun in the first and second years were still to be completed. ILCCE providers work with services that have spare capacity to support them to be more responsive to their communities. It is not possible to link increased enrolments in these services to enrolment of priority families who have not previously attended ECE, since ILCCE providers do not work directly with families. Just over a fifth of EPF families have left the EPF initiative for unknown reasons (20.5%), which matches with higher levels of transience and the level of support needed for these families to engage with ECE. They also have one of the higher rates of leaving for school (6.9%), a reflection of the older ages of the children within the initiative, and that transition to school is part of the initiative design. Just over a third of supported playgroup families left for unknown reasons (34.4%), but across the initiatives they showed higher levels of leaving for school (7.2%) or another ECE service (16.5%), which could be an indication that supported playgroups are bridging a gap to more formalised ECE. The TAP initiatives have a lower rate of leaving for school (2.2%) and a higher rate of leaving for unknown reasons (23.6%).

The total number of Māori ever enrolled in the Participation Programme as at 2012 was 1,979 (51.8% of all enrolments) and Pasifika enrolments numbered 1,615 (42.3%), showing the initiatives are supporting ECE participation for these children. The statistics do not show the percentage of these children who had had prior ECE experience, so the overall levels of participation in ECE for Māori and Pasifika children may be less than these figures would predict.Uptake of Participation Initiatives for 2012 by priority groups is set out in Figure 1 below, indicating that only a very small percentage (4 percent) of children are not from these groups.

Figure 1: Percentages of Priority Groups enrolled in the Participation Programme as at 31 December 2012. Includes all currently enrolled and currently registered children.*



Consistent with their policy intent, EPF initiatives were catering predominantly for 3- and 4 year-olds, while SP and FRHB were catering for younger children as well.

Effectiveness of initiatives in increasing participation

Intensive Community Participation Projects (ICPP) have led to the implementation of Community Action Groups (CAG). These focus on building local capacity with community ownership through the development of community networks which are multiagency but have an interest in families and young children. ICPP providers have in-depth community knowledge, are part of the community focused on, and shared a passion for the need for a better future for their communities.

Engaging Priority Families (EPF). The key factors that make the EPF initiative effective in increasing participation include relationship building; a brokering role in respect to health, housing, and other social services; providers often delivered a range of initiatives or had services to support families; were connected with many ECE services in their communities; acted as go-between for often vulnerable parents with ECE services. Underpinning the work conducted by EPF providers was the ability to form trusting relationships with families with high needs. The intensive nature of the work, with one-on-one home visits by a case worker to families, and the length of time spent working with families provided the opportunity to help families to address underlying issues that were making it difficult for them to engage in ECE. EPF providers negotiated with ECE services minimal or no fees for EPF parents, access where waiting lists were an issue, and addressed other barriers such as provision of food and transport. They worked with services to encourage responsiveness to families with high needs, supporting them to find solutions to families' issues.

Parents supported by EPF were predominantly Pasifika and Māori with at least one child aged three or four who had not previously attended ECE. Many families had more than one child five years of age and under. Most of the EPF parents had little or no transport, and were on benefits or low incomes. Some of the EPF parents were familiar with multiple agencies including Child Youth and Welfare and Family Start. Some parents had poor educational experiences themselves that have impacted on their ability to engage with resources in their communities.

Many parents struggled with the paperwork required to enrol their children in ECE, and some felt that they would be judged if they walked into a centre to make enquiries. The support of EPF providers was essential in both alleviating social issues prior to them engaging in ECE but also in organising transport, negotiating fees, and introducing parents to a very unfamiliar environment.

Many Māori EPF parents were either disengaged from their culture or felt that language and culture should be passed on in the home rather than in ECE. Caseworkers work with EPF families to look for ECE services where families feel most at ease.

There appeared to be three key issues faced by EPF providers. One was balancing the need in the community with the number of families their contract stipulates they are to engage in ECE. The second was the targeting of one child in each family aged three and over, while the third was the non-responsiveness of some ECE services to the families they worked with.

Supported Playgroups (SP). The key factors that make SP effective in increasing participation include knowledge of and networks within communities, and the ability to fit provision to the needs of the local community, previous experience with Ministry contracts, provision of an environment where families feel safe and connected, support for language, culture and identity, and low or minimum cost of attendance and limited need for transport.

SP families were predominantly Pasifika and Māori, although New Zealand European, Asian and African families also attended supported playgroups. The SP families were generally engaged with their local community and interested in accessing resources available to them. They tended to be aware of what was available or have the ability to enquire about what services were in their area. Those parents who were less engaged in the community, particularly Pasifika families, were introduced to playgroups by family members or friends. Māori whānau appeared to attend because of input from others in their community, or word of mouth.

The close location of SP to families as they carried out daily business was an essential factor in parents finding out about them. Being able to walk to playgroups was important to parents as this made them accessible where transport was an issue.

Parents liked the fact that they could attend with and learn alongside their children. This was very important to those parents who were unwilling to leave their children to be cared for by others. Many parents seemed to have a strong awareness of the benefits of ECE and therefore the impact on their child's education. In some SP, language, culture and identity were pivotal to participation. This was particularly evident for Māori and Pasifika whānau/families but also for other cultures where English was not a language spoken at home. The recognition of religious beliefs was also important to Pasifika families.

It seems that SP face particular issues impacting on sustainability. These are retention of trained coordinators with experience in ECE; the sustainability of the playgroups once Ministry contracts have finished; and finding appropriate venues with limited funding.

Flexible and Responsive Home-Based (FRHB). One of the strengths of the FRHB initiative is the connections providers have made with other agencies also working with families in their communities and the platform this provides for sharing of information where relevant, supporting recruitment of families and referrals to support families. Another strength is the focus on finding a key person to work in the community, with local knowledge, connections and an understanding of the families they worked with.

Families using the FRHB initiative tend to be looking for care in situations where there are low numbers, and they like the low ratios. The make-up of families varies according to locality. According to a provider, many families preferred the home environment because it gave "connections with their own culture and then that feeling of sense of belonging". Developing a sense of trust and extended family with the caregiver/educator was important to FRHB parents. It was also important to families that the caregiver/educator lived close to them as transport was usually an issue.

Comments would seem to indicate that the structure of the FRHB model requires further thought. Is this a valuable model or does it require restructuring in order to better meet community needs? The model placed limitations on providers working in low socioeconomic areas. Firstly, levels of take up of FRHB are low. Second, there are issues in finding home environments that meet the required standards and in sourcing funding to upgrade the environments so they meet standards. Another issue is the unwillingness of families to transition to the licensed and certificated model. Pasifika and Māori families in informal arrangements could be unwilling to take payment.

The example of a kindergarten association that used a TAP 3 grant to set up a home-based scheme, with apparent success for educators and families, offers ideas on how MOE could improve the FRHB scheme. The association recruits educators from the target area, puts in its own resources to bring homes up to licensing standards, and supports educators through fee payment and provision of childcare to undertake an eight week (two days per week) training course which results in their obtaining an NZQA Level 3 certificate (to meet licensing

requirements). The FRHB educators are also supported in the home by a qualified teacher coordinator, which is standard across all licenced home-based ECE provision. Additionally, educators are required to bring their children to a playgroup once a week where a qualified teacher takes the programme, modelling and discussing teaching and learning and offering workshops.This model has been subsidised by the kindergarten association while numbers grow and according to the executive officer could not have been sustainable without this support.

It would be useful to find ways for providers to regularly share information, perhaps through technology, so they are able to exchange and discuss ideas and solutions to issues and work on the same page.

Targeted Assistance for Provision (TAP). The key strengths of the TAP providers reflected the intent of the initiative with providers working to build strong relationships with their communities and develop services that reflect the culture and language of their community and connected with families in their communities, encouraging participation by previously non-participating Māori and Pasifika families.

While many TAP families were Māori and Pasifika, families also included those from many other cultures, including refugees. Families often faced social, economic and health related issues, which meant they placed a lower priority on ECE. Many families were unfamiliar with ECE environments and the idea of learning for children prior to school. Other families were interested but unable to afford the cost of their children attending a service. Some families have a history of erratic participation caused by transience. Families heard about services either through word of mouth from other families using services, friends or neighbours, or, through meetings with providers or other agencies in communities.

The key issue facing TAP providers was the length of time they had to wait for either resource consents, or, once these were acquired, building consents from local council. This created uncertainty for providers in terms of their timeframes for opening; and therefore challenges in recruiting families.

Identity Language, Culture and Community Engagement (ILCCE) initiatives are intended to provide identity, language and culture support for clusters of services that have available child spaces in areas of low participation. The intent of ILCCE is to assist ECE services to increase their community responsiveness and so increase the engagement and participation of local families We found that providers supported many ECE service managers to examine and change their fee structures and enrolment requirements where cost presented barriers to participation. The focus was not only on language and culture.

According to providers, ILCCE initiatives supported ECE participation by encouraging the development of a culturally rich community in ECE where people feel welcome. An important attribute was the ‘right person’ to work with services, people with strong connections to the community or local iwi.

ILCCE works for communities where ECE participation is low amongst Māori and Pasifika, and where there has been a reluctance to use existing services. ILCCE aims to improve responsiveness of services through working with teachers/educators and management. It looks at identity, language and culture and how to support services to meet the needs of, in particular, Māori and Pasifika families. In addition ILCCE was said to have supported the removal of cost and transport barriers, with creative policy changes being made to address these as a result of discussions about how to engage families.

The engagement of services in removing barriers to participation indicates that it could be useful to extend this particular form of support to other services in areas of low participation. Feedback from providers of other initiatives, such as EPF, and families has highlighted non-responsiveness of some ECE services as a barrier inhibiting families from attending some services. Centre support with a focus on belonging, welcoming

relationships, language culture and identity and on removing cost and access barriers would be beneficial in addressing this.

Conclusion

Participation Programme initiatives generally contributed to increases in participation not only by meeting targets but through the engagement of families. Overall, initiatives are responsive to communities they work within both in regard to looking to remove barriers but also through linking families to ECE environments with which they identify and have a cultural affinity. For SP the involvement of family and the culturally responsive environments were important in participation of predominantly Pasifika and Māori families but also families where English was not their first language. EPF initiatives work to address the needs of families and ensure engagement with suitable and responsive ECE services. TAP initiatives have been and are being developed to respond to the specific needs of communities including cultural, language and identity. ILCCE initiatives have increased service cultural responsiveness to communities in addition to working to address cost and transport barriers to participation. FRHB initiatives have been less successful, but in one community a model has emerged that, through the provider's ECE umbrella organisation, meets both care-giving and early learning needs of families.

Two main challenges emerge from the findings for practice and policy. The findings highlighted the significance of ECE services connecting with families to generate a sense of belonging, a sense that this is our place, we are welcome here, and our contribution is valued. These have been described as primary focuses for children's transitions and apply equally to parents; connection between home and the ECE setting enables funds of knowledge and cultural capital to be shared to the benefit of all. Where there is a strong connection between ECE services and families, parents are more likely to remain engaged, and children are more likely to continue to attend ECE. Overall, parents want their children to be educated. Reducing barriers of cost, location and unresponsiveness within services (as the Participation Programme initiatives do) needs to be a common goal across the ECE sector, as these are key enablers for priority families to engage in ECE.

1. Introduction

This report is from the second stage of an evaluation of the Ministry of Education's (MOE) ECE Participation Programme. The overall evaluation focus is on how the Participation Programme and individual initiatives addressed barriers to participation in early childhood education (ECE) for target groups and communities.

The Participation Programme comprises a package of six initiatives to increase participation in ECE in target communities with the greatest numbers of children starting school without having attended ECE. When it was announced in Budget 2010, the aim of the programme for an additional 3,500 children to enrol in quality ECE by the year 2014, and to prioritise communities with the greatest number who do not have prior ECE participation. Priority children are deemed to be non-participating Māori and Pasifika children, and children from low socioeconomic communities. Since then, in March 2012, as part of the Better Public Services programme, the Government set a goal that in 2016, 98% of children starting school will have participated in quality ECE.

The participation initiatives are

1. Engaging Priority Families (EPF)—intensive support programmes for 3- and 4-year-olds and their families, aimed at leading to enrolment in ECE, regular participation in ECE, support for learning at home and a successful transition to school. The priority for this initiative is families and whānau in the most vulnerable situations whose children are not participating in ECE and who, without intensive support, are unlikely to do so
2. Supported Playgroups (SP)—certificated playgroups, with regular support from a kaimanaaki/playgroup educator in areas with low participation.
3. Flexible and Responsive Home-based Services (FRHB)—aim to either expand existing services and community agencies into home-based ECE delivery or to transition informal care arrangements into licensed and certificated ECE environments.
4. Identity, Language, Culture and Community Engagement (ILCCE)—support packages providing identity, language and culture professional support for clusters of services that have available child spaces and are not responsive to their community.
5. Intensive Community Participation Programme (ICPP)—community-led participation projects established to address the specific reasons children are not participating in ECE.
6. Targeted Assistance for Participation (TAP)—grants, incentives and partnership opportunities to help establish new services and child spaces in those communities where new child places are needed most and are not being created quickly enough.

The participation initiatives are being introduced in waves over 2010 to 2014. The targeting of particular initiatives within target areas is based on a needs assessment and local MOE knowledge.

The Ministry of Education funded an evaluation of the Participation Programme to take place over four years. The purpose of the evaluation is both summative in gauging the effectiveness of the Participation Programme approach and outcomes, and formative in guiding development. A team from the Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research, University of Waikato, was selected to work with the Ministry of Education to undertake Stage 1 of the evaluation in 2011 and 2012, Stage 2 in 2012 and 2013, and subsequent stages as agreed. An Evaluation Working Group of Ministry of Education staff and University of Waikato researchers is leading the

evaluation. It is responsible for the high-level evaluation objectives and evaluation plans, with further roles and responsibilities being assigned during the evaluation.

Evaluation questions

High-level evaluation questions are related to ECE participation, outcomes for children/tamariki, family/whānau and communities, provision of quality ECE, and the role of the Ministry of Education. In essence these aim to find out about how well and in what ways the Participation Programme has contributed to enhancing each of these outcomes, and the role played by the MOE in developing and delivering effective participation initiatives.

Table 2: Evaluation objectives, questions and stage at which data will be collected

Objective 1: ECE participation for Māori children, Pasifika children and children in low socioeconomic communities. Data gathered in each phase, with in-depth focus in Stage 1 and Stage 2
Evaluation questions 1.1 How effective has the Participation Programme been in raising participation in high quality ECE? 1.2 How well do the initiatives and their underpinning approach work individually and together to address the main barriers to participation in areas where there is currently low ECE participation?
Objective 2: Improved learning outcomes for participating children/tamariki and family/whānau. Data gathered in Stages 2, 3 and 4. Some data in Stage 1 on parent engagement in ECE and involvement in child's education will be gathered.
Evaluation questions 2.1 Have learning outcomes for participating children been improved? 2.2 How well do the initiatives support parents' engagement in ECE? How well do the initiatives support parents' involvement with children's education? 2.3 Have the initiatives been responsive to family needs for ECE? 2.4 Have each of the initiatives and the Participation Programme overall addressed issues of identity, language and culture in the communities where the initiatives are being undertaken?
Objective 3: Improved responsiveness to participating communities. Key focus in Stage 2. Data gathered in Stages 2, 3 and 4.
Evaluation questions 3.1 Have the initiatives been responsive to community needs for ECE? 3.2 How does the community involvement support the development of ECE services responsive to the needs of the local community in areas where there is currently low participation?
Objective 4: Provision of quality ECE. Data gathered in Stages 2, 3 and 4. Key focus in Stages 3 and 4.
Evaluation question 4.1 Have the participation initiatives contributed to quality ECE being delivered?
Objective 5: Ministry approach. Data gathered in each stage.
Evaluation question 5.1 How did the role the MOE played contribute to developing effective participation initiatives in areas of low ECE participation? Was the implementation of initiatives effective?

Methodology

The evaluation design enabled meaningful information to be gathered about ECE participation of children from Māori, Pasifika and low-income families about the participation initiatives and the overall Participation Programme. Information needed to be tracked over four years to see what changes and outcomes were occurring for children and families. The evaluation needed to be able to relate any changes found to the nature of the initiatives and MOE and community involvement in development and delivery of them.

One limitation is in our access to parents. We were reliant on providers to help us contact families with whom they were working. We asked providers to distribute a survey and support parents to complete it and to invite parents to participate in an interview. In both stages, providers did not always want to pass on an invitation to recently recruited parents to take part in these tasks. We managed to gain a good number of parent responses and achieve a higher parental survey response rate in Stage 2 of the evaluation (310 parents, 33% of those surveyed, compared with Stage 1, where 86 parents, 14.7% of those surveyed responded). In Stage 2, of the 310 family surveys returned, 119 were from EPF families, 98 from TAP families, 83 from families involved in the supported playgroup initiative, eight from home-based and two from ILCCE. The surveys were completed by the main caregiver and if language assistance was needed, the provider was asked to assist and provide support for completion.

Evaluation questions were addressed through mixed methods, using quantitative and qualitative measures. More information providing an evaluation overview, discussion of the evaluation objectives and questions, and research methods is set out in the baseline report (Mitchell et al., 2013).

In the period November 2011 to April 2012 and again in October 2012 to May 2013, we gathered the following data from MOE staff, participation initiative providers, and families using participation initiatives.

- MOE data on enrolments;
- Interviews with MOE staff;
- A survey of all participation initiative providers;
- Interviews with staff from a sample of each type of initiative;
- Focus group discussions with MOE staff and community representatives in areas in which an ICPP had started: Kaikohe, Waitakere, Tamaki in Stages 1 and 2, and Hastings in Stage 2 only;
- A survey of families engaged in the initiatives; and
- Interviews with families from three of the initiatives (SP, EPF, FRHB).

The approach to analysing the ways in which participation initiatives and the overall programme enhanced family and community responsiveness was through triangulating survey and interview data from MOE, providers, and families.

Focus of the report

This report covers all the evaluation objectives listed above.

Chapter 2 examines individual initiatives and overall programme responsiveness to families. It addresses four key areas:

1. Matching families' aspirations and needs to provision.
2. Supporting parental involvement in early learning in ECE.
3. Responding to parent needs for quality; and
4. Responding to language and culture.

Chapter 3 explores community responsiveness, including

- the intent of the Participation Programme;
- inclusion of community perspectives during the establishment and decisions about provision;
- selection of providers who connect with the community; and
- how providers implement the initiative in a community responsive way.

Chapter 4 looks at increases in national participation in ECE and participation by priority groups over the course of the Participation Programme.

Chapter 5 examines participation by individual initiative with attention drawn to how effective initiatives have been in increasing participation, the strengths of each initiative, what works for whom and why, and what could be improved.

Findings are drawn together in Chapter 6, which examines how the Participation Programme is working overall and by initiative to enhance family and community responsiveness and increase participation by priority families through addressing barriers.

2. Family responsiveness

Matching families' aspirations and needs to provision

Profile of families

Survey and interview data gathered from families for the evaluation was derived from a small subset of all the families in the Participation Programme. Table 3 sets out the number and ethnicities of survey responses compared with MOE statistics for all the families in each of the four initiatives surveyed. Three hundred and eight families responded, 17% of the 1817 families of the children enrolled across these initiatives as at December 2012. Similar to MOE statistics, the majority of surveyed families identified their children as being of Māori or Pasifika ethnicity.

Table 3: Number and ethnicities of surveyed families in four Participation Programme initiatives

Initiative	MOE statistics	Ethnicities MOE statistics n	Number and percentage of families responding to survey n=308 (%)	Ethnicities of surveyed children*
Engaging Priority Families (EPF)	814	Māori = 472 Pasifika = 423	119 (15%)	Māori = 76 Pasifika = 115
Supported Playgroups	663	Māori = 329 Pasifika = 296	83 (13%)	Māori = 52 Pasifika = 92
Targeted Assistance for Provision (TAP)	294	Māori = 159 Pasifika = 130	98 (33%)	Māori = 109 Pasifika = 65
Flexible and Responsive Home-based (FRHB)**	46	Māori = 18 Pasifika = 12	8 (17%)	Māori = 6 Pasifika = 2

* *May identify with more than one ethnicity so totals will not equal number of children*

** *A further six HB parents were interviewed from the TAP-funded HB provision. They are reported within this report as 'TAP-funded HB'.*

Further demographic characteristics of families completing the survey and also participating in interviews are set out in Table 4 below. Most rated their household income as less than $30,000 per annum although a high percentage (40%) of families marked that they did not know their income level or did not respond to the income question.

Table 4: Number of families surveyed and interviewed, number of preschool children in families, and household income by four participation initiatives

Initiative	Number of families responding to survey (n=308)	Number of preschool children in families (n=462)	Household income	Families interviewed
Engaging Priority Families (EPF)	119	167	Under $20,000 = 39 $20,000-29,000 = 26 $30,000-$49,000 = 9 $50,000-69,000 = 1 $70,000 and over = 1 Not sure = 28 No response = 15	20
Targeted Assistance for Provision (TAP)	98	158	Under $20,000 = 22 $20,000-29,000 = 19 $30,000-$49,000 = 8 $50,000-69,000 = 9 $70,000 and over =1 Not sure = 33 No response = 19	5
Supported Playgroups (SP)	83	128	Under $20,000 = 15 $20,000-29,000 = 10 $30,000-$49,000 = 22 $50,000-69,000 = 3 $70,000 and over =3 Not sure = 20 No response = 6	10
Flexible and Responsive Home-based (FRHB)	8	9	Under $20,000 = 2 $20,000-29,000 = 2 $30,000-$49,000 = 1 $50,000-69,000 = 0 $70,000 and over =0 Not sure = 3 No response = 0	9

* *May identify with more than one ethnicity so totals will not equal number of children.*

Overall, the initiatives, especially TAP, seem to be playing a role in supporting a percentage of families who participate in paid employment (21.6%) and study (20.3%), although we did not ask parents directly if their employment or study was during the times they were accessing ECE.

Table 5: Numbers and percentages of parents and caregivers in paid employment or study

Initiative	In paid work n(%)			In training or study n(%)		
	No(%)	Part time	Full time	No(%)	Part time	Full time
EPF (n=119)	99 (83)	10 (8)	5 (4)	92 (77)	11 (9)	7 (6)
TAP (n=98)	75 (77)	14 (14)	7 (7)	61 (62)	23 (24)	11 (11)
SP (n=83)	53 (64)	18 (22)	9 (11)	70 (84)	5 (6)	4 (5)
HB (n=8)	5 (63)	2 (25)	1 (13)	6 (75)	1 (13)	1 (13)
ILCCE (n=2)	1 (50)	1 (50)	0 (0)	2 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total	233 (75)	45 (15)	22 (7)	231 (75)	40 (13)	23 (7)

Participation in paid employment for parents completing the survey was fairly similar in both Stages 1 and 2, with some variation by initiative type. The majority of parents were not in any form of paid employment (75.2% in Stage 1 compared with 82.6% in Stage 2). Overall, in Stage 2, 14.5% of parents stated they were in part-time employment and 7.1% stated they were in full-time employment. Across the initiatives, 83.2% of the EPF families surveyed said they were in no paid work, about the same as the previous year and the highest for all the initiatives, as would be expected from the initiative design. A small percentage said they were in part-time (8.4%) and full-time employment (4.2%). The surveyed TAP families also had a high percentage of parents or caregivers not working (76.5%). The biggest change from the previous year was for supported playgroup parents who completed the survey. Just 63.9% said they were in no form of employment; a big drop from Stage 1 (82.1%). This is surprising since supported playgroups require a parent/caregiver to be present much of the time, an arrangement that traditionally does not suit working parents. Five of the eight home-based family survey respondents were not in paid employment, two were in part-time and one in full-time paid employment.

The majority of responding parents (74.5%) were in no study or training, 12.9% were in part-time study and 7.4% in full-time study. TAP had the highest number of parents in study with 23.5% in part-time study and 11.2% in full-time study (three did not respond). Most EPF parents (77.3%) were not in study, 9.2% were in part-time and 5.9% in full-time study (nine parents did not respond). Most SP families (84.3%) were not involved in any study, 6% were in part-time and 4.8% in full-time study. Six of the eight home-based parents were not in any study while one was in part-time and one in full-time.

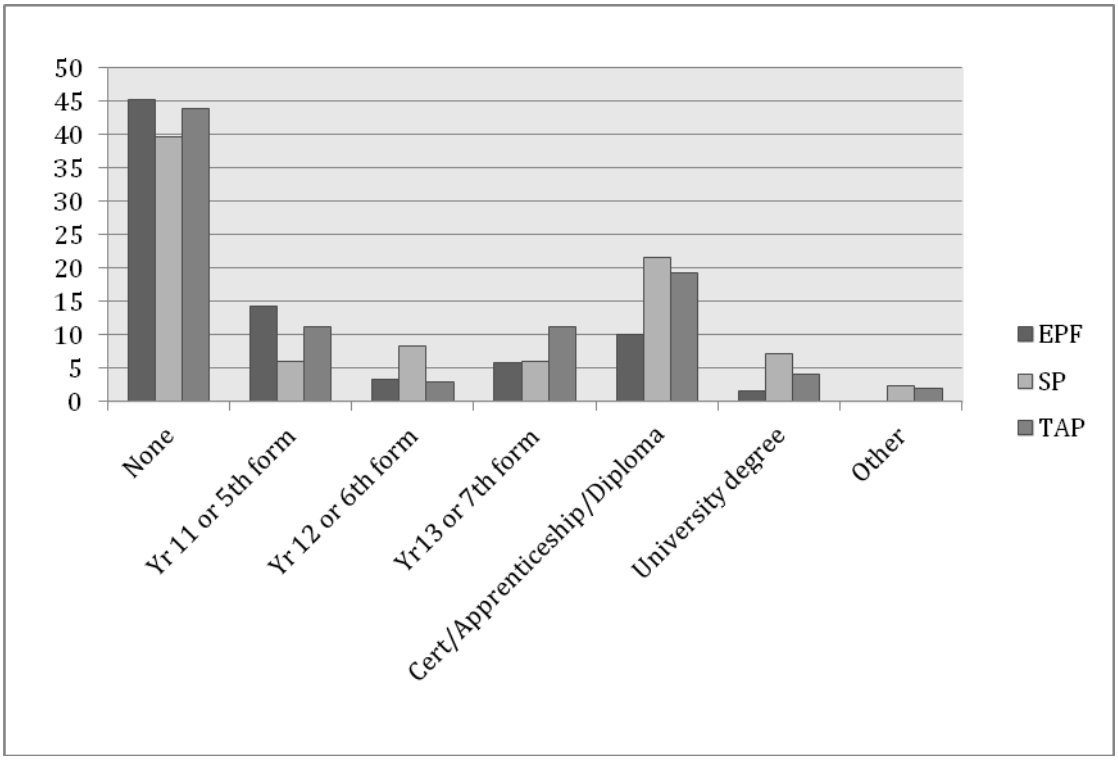
We asked families whether in the last 12 months they had received any specified types of income support. Domestic Purposes Benefit and Family Support were the most common forms of income assistance received overall. Most responding parents had some form of income support, reinforcing the findings that the initiatives are reaching low-income families. The majority of responding EPF families (84.9%) indicated they were receiving some type of government assistance, most commonly Family Support and the Domestic Purposes Benefit (both 37%). Overall, 82.7% of the responding TAP families said they were getting some type of government assistance. These TAP families were mostly receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit (55%) although 23.5% were receiving Family Support and 14.3% said they were claiming none of the options given in the survey. Only 61% of the responding supported playgroup families said they were receiving some sort of assistance and, of these, most were receiving Family Support.

Table 6: Income support received by surveyed families

Initiative	NZ Super-annuation	Family Support	Un-employ-ment	Domestic Purposes Benefit	Sickness or Invalids	Student Allowance	Other	None of the given	Don't know
EPF (n=119)	1	44	9	44	11	1	3	3	2
TAP (n=98)	0	23	7	54	4	1	0	14	2
SP (n=83)	7	33	9	10	1	2	1	22	5
HB (n=8)	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	1	0
ILCCE (n=2)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (n=310)	9	104	25	111	16	4	4	40	9

Parents surveyed were asked to mark their highest qualification. Overall, 130 parents of 300 respondents (43%) reported that they held no qualification. Thirty-three parents (11%) held a Year 11 or 5th form certificate and 14 parents (5%) held a Year 12 or 6th form certificate as their highest qualification. TAP (24%) and SP parents (29%) were more likely to hold a tertiary qualification than were EPF (12%) parents.

Figure 2: Qualification levels of surveyed parents



In summary, the statistical data indicates that the initiative families are predominantly of Māori and Pasifika ethnicity, mainly low income, and accessing income assistance, especially the Domestic Purposes Benefits and Family Support. Almost half had no school leaving qualifications. On the whole, it appears that the initiatives are reaching the intended families.

Family aspirations and needs for ECE

At the start of the family interviews after informal talking, we invited parents to draw a picture or write words representing their dreams for their child. We then asked parents to talk about their drawing. We asked parents about their short-term and long-term aspirations. We followed on with questions asking what do you need and hope for your child from ECE? What about for your family? Some parents did not draw, but talked about their aspirations.

Figure 3: Parent drawing of their aspirations for their child

> The future is at the top. I feel like I want my children growing in the multicultural [society]—a very colourful life [draws colours] … tell them this world is beautiful and … they are very happy…. In the future I hope my children is happy … they are on a stage, they are successful. I am here [below stage], happy, give them a clap. I don't care they got success for money or anything, I want they got a heart and they are valuable and they got love, joy and are happy. (EPF mum interview)

Every parent spoke of wanting their child to be happy, to live well, to "have a good life". For some parents, concern for their child to live "a good life" related to their own or other family members' experiences.

> There is no parent in this world who does not want their child to live well, like you or me. I want to encourage my children because I do not want my children to be like other children, I want my children to live well and be smart so they can get good jobs like yourself. (SP mum interview)

> What I want is the children to grow up and be happy and normal not like their mother. (HB grandmother interview)

> To be honest I just want them to be happy, whether or not they can be something, I just want them to be happy. In our family we have had a lot of deaths from depression, unhappy, lonely…. Stay out of jail, have a big heart. (SP mum interview)

Many said that they wanted their children to develop in their own way and according to their unique interests and talents.

> I would like for them to find their niche, what they want to do. I could say I want them to get a job, but I want them to do what makes them happy. (SP mum interview)

> For myself, I will always be wanting my kids to achieve their own dreams without me forcing them to do it. (SP mum interview)

All the parents regarded education as a key to a good life. In early childhood education, a common parental aspiration was for their children to learn to interact and communicate with others, make friends, be respectful and considerate. Some parents talked of learning to live with others from different cultural groups. Associated with developing socially was a desire for their children to be independent of the parent.

> That's what I like and I expect of ECE, which is to give my children a chance to be an independent person outside of the family—they own it. (EPF mum interview)

A range of curriculum areas were mentioned as being important in early childhood education, i.e., reading, writing, counting, singing, dancing, and drawing. A main focus was on parents wanting their child to learn literacy and numeracy skills.

> He's pretty good with his words and that—his writing will be the main thing—he can only do the X in his name that's the only thing—it would be good if he can know the letters—he doesn't know the ABC—I'd like him to know the ABC. (EPF mum interview)

> Teach them the basics before they start school—like [older child] she knew the different colours, the numbers, even using her numbers, just the basics. (SP mum interview)

One parent, an HB father, wanted to know how his children ranked in comparison with others.

> I guess where the children stand educationally. It gives me an insight to where they are, like a baseline. Are they on course? Are they advanced? Are they retarded? Are they normal average kids? Is there some problem that is starting to show up? Is something starting to come to light? Do they need glasses? Do they need hearing aids or something like that? So to bring those things to sight and starting to get a foundation of where they are in life and getting them started in life. (HB dad interview)

The children of this parent had been in CYFS care for 18 months and he was anxious that their experiences may have affected their learning and development.

A few parents contrasted their own schooling experiences with what they wanted for their child.

> I love them to get through school but to be honest I was really brainy when I was growing up and I got bored and said I don't want to be here anymore. I don't want them to get bored with school.… What made me bored was the classroom was like just sitting there all day, looking at the blackboard and writing things down. That was like that every day. (EPF mum interview)

> For me like education-wise it is important [to finish school]. I never had the chance to complete mine. If I can invest in him and his future.… (EPF mum interview)

Parents' long-term goals for their child were

- a stable family life/more settled family life;
- to finish school and continue education after school—basic education and further education;
- employment, having a purpose to their life, being able to make choices and have a future;
- to be involved in sports and other community activities;
- cultural connectedness. Some parents considered it important for the child to be connected—although this was often through the family and not necessarily seen as the responsibility of ECE.

How providers find out about aspirations and needs

Most providers had worked in the community for a long time, had established relationships with a network of services supporting families, and knew the profile of families whom they were aiming to recruit.

> Because we did have the PPP ECE project we actually learnt from that—we knew what the needs of the community were. We hadn't worked in the … area before but we had other services in our organisation that could actually feed into that at that time [parenting service]. (EPF provider interview)

> I think in a large part you just become familiar with the issues of the community once you are in there. It's probably not something you can get from the outside but once you are working with the families they are happy to let you know what is going on. (EPF provider interview)

> We do engage with other community services such as CYFs, WINZ, Salvation Army, there's a number of organisations we can refer them to if we can't help or we can collaboratively work with other orgs to meet the needs of the family. (EPF provider interview)

One provider mentioned the ICPP community action group as bringing community groups together.

> If you look at the other side of that as well that's like a professional working relationship within the area. In the Tamaki ward there is the TLC initiative—Tamaki Learning Champions—which is [names two team members who work in the ward]—who play a more active role in the ward by attending play days. (EPF provider interview)

It was through discussion and personal relationships that providers found out about aspirations and needs of families, rather than any formal or written information. Discussion was geared to needs of different families—whether the family already wanted to participate or were not keen. One EPF provider said that

> Some really want to engage with ECE. Some of the community don't engage with ECE because it's quite foreign to them, and with this half [we] work on building relationships and talk about the benefits of ECE. [We] have had heaps of support from the community, mainly because [we] encourage ECE participation where otherwise it would not happen. Families are transient but only within certain areas. (EPF provider interview)

EPF providers found out about needs through talking with families, often helping families address basic needs for health, housing, income support etc., before discussing ECE. Then they asked families what they wanted for their tamariki.

> A lot of our families are in crisis, they think, "Now, now, now", they can't think long term, does that make sense? Yeah, so they're stressing out about their benefit that's going to be cut, their power that's going to be cut, or yeah I'm going to be evicted. So we work with our families to eliminate those because we can't work with this until these things are done because this just isn't a priority. So again it's just trying to make ECE a priority by eliminating those. So we can put ECE on the board. At the forefront. (EPF provider interview)

Providers then suggested ECE services that they thought would suit families, talked through options, brokering arrangements to reduce barriers, encouraging families to have a look. Families often did not know the options.

> There's a deliberate kind of selection of centres to meet the family's needs.… We've been working with some high-risk families where safety is a big priority so we've put them in full time at no cost to the families. Because of safety concerns. (EPF provider interview)

EPF parents and whānau also said that they received information and support in finding an ECE service to suit their family.

Once children were enrolled in an ECE service, EPF providers sometimes acted as a go-between in providing information about the ECE service and the child's learning to the parent.

SP, TAP and HB providers were providing an ECE service and recruiting families to the service. Often needs had been canvassed before the service was set up, e.g., through community meetings, leafleting, liaison with others. A TAP provided education and care centre that was not attracting enough families surveyed families to find out about needs regarding opening times and adapted its hours to suit.

ILCCE providers often found out about family needs through their own community connections, and in some cases held a contract for EPF where families' reactions to different services in the community were known to them. "They talk across the different initiatives to discuss some cross over" (EPF provider interview). Surveys and group discussions with families were another method of finding out about needs.

ICPP providers had access to an initial scoping report that identified barriers to participation and recommendations about what to do about these. The reports provided some information about family needs and were based on research. Community Action Groups were establishing community-based initiatives, many of which were acting as a hub for attracting families, for ECE services to explain and demonstrate their provision and its value, and for discussing needs.

In summary, providers who were located in the community were able to use their community understanding and local networks to find out about aspirations and needs and recruit families.

How initiative providers supported families into ECE

Families' basic and predominant need was for ECE provision that was free or low cost and affordable, locally available and/or with transport provided. In Stage 2 the parent survey asked how the initiative providers had supported families in getting their children to attend ECE.

EPF. Forty-seven (39.5%) of the EPF families indicated through the survey that their provider had supported them to enable their child to attend ECE by reducing the cost of fees or donations required by services. The support could include sourcing ECE services that were providing a free service or helping the family to access 20 hours at no cost. Other costs were also identified as a barrier for families and 30 (25%) have indicated that their provider helped to reduce these. Reducing or removing the transport barrier was selected by 44 (37%) of the EPF families. Thirty-four EPF families said they had been supported in other ways by their provider, indicating that the EPF initiative is operating as designed, as providers are funded to provide additional support to EPF families.

Those families who said they had been supported in other ways wrote about the support and advocacy of the EPF workers in, for example, finding suitable and available places for their children, enabling families to bypass waiting lists, helping with enrolment. They commented on emotional support, and providing information and motivation for ECE as well as everyday living support. Some of their comments are below.

> By arranging for my child to go to the top of the waiting list at our kindy.
>
> Provide food parcels and others for my family.
>
> Support person for my family and I.
>
> By supporting my decisions and working hard to get children on a transport roll.
>
> Helping to make me understand the good of taking my children to pre-school to start learning.

We asked parents to describe what the "three best things about the initiative were". Two hundred and three EPF comments were made.

- Eighty-six of the responses (42.4%) were around support, encouragement, help and advocacy for the family, which matches the intention of the EPF initiative to reduce barriers and provide support in all areas so attending ECE can be achievable for the family.
- Thirty-three (16.3%) of the responses stated that the fact their child was attending ECE or learning was the best thing about the initiative, which could show how the opportunity for ECE is valued within the family.
- The interpersonal skills of provider staff was mentioned 21 times, the information that was provided to families, 17 times, and the resources and activities that the children had access to was mentioned 10 times.
- Communication with the provider, the location or provision of transport and the fact that EPF workers "come to us" were all mentioned six times.
- Other comments included the EPF workers' relationship with the child, the building of community and support networks, having an ELP (Early Learning Plan) and the environment.

These most common comments show the strong relationships that have been built with EPF coordinators and the role coordinators play in reducing barriers through support, advocacy and encouragement. Parents gained

confidence and motivation through these supports. That their children are attending ECE and learning seems to be highly valued by some of these families.

TAP. The provider support given to families who have been involved in the TAP initiative shows a very different picture from the EPF families. One proviso about survey data from TAP families is that a very high response (around 95 percent) came from one provider. This is likely to skew the overall view of the intitiative.

The reduction or elimination of fees was selected by 47 families (50%) as a way the provider had supported them to access ECE for their child. In addition to this 34 (34.7%) highlighted a reduction in other costs such as food. Overwhelmingly, 70 of the 98 families (71.4%) said that solving transport issues had made access to ECE possible. This may be due to the TAP initiative design of expanding capacity in ECE services, or building new ECE services where there is a community need for them. In contrast to EPF only six families indicated any other way the provider had supported them (which also reflects the additional support to families built into the EPF initiative). Two of these were related to cost, two were comments about support or the change to the family environment and two were comments about what the child was learning.

When asked about the things they felt were the best about the initiative they were involved in, 116 comments were made by 98 respondents:

- Their child attending an ECE was the most common comment (23 or 23.5%).
- Transport being provided or the location of the centre was mentioned 18 times (15.5%).
- The support and encouragement from staff and the lack of cost were mentioned 15 (12.9%) and 12 (10.3%) times respectively.

There was a range of other answers including the environment, renovations and improvements, interpersonal skills of staff, transitions to school, friendliness of staff and communication, although none of these items received more than three or four comments.

SP. Fifty-eight (69.9%) SP families stated reduction or removal of cost had been the biggest support enabling their child to attend ECE. This is the highest percentage of responding families across the initiatives that said this. As well as this 28 or 33.7% said their provider had reduced other costs associated with ECE such as food. In contrast with the other initiatives, only 14 (19.9%) said that alleviation of transport problems had helped them access ECE. However, 23 (27.7%) of the supported playgroup families said they had been supported in accessing ECE by their provider in other ways. The majority of these were about there being no cost (14), and three related to food being provided or shared. The other comments were about making friends, getting information and being able to provide and maintain their language and culture.

From the 83 supported playgroup families who responded to the survey, 174 comments describing the best things about the initiative were recorded. All these comments relate to taking ownership and creating a service that is right for “them”, the people who are involved and attending.

- The most common comment was that their child was attending ECE and/or learning (28 or 16.1%).
- Support and encouragement along with the resources and activities at the service both received 19 comments (10.9%).
- Lack of cost was mentioned 15 times (8.6.
- The next most common comments were around building community and social supports (14, 8%).
- Having a leader or someone responsible for the group (8, 4.6%).

- Culture and language and parental involvement (both 7, or 4%).

Additional comments about the "best things" included location, the environment, interpersonal skills of staff, being happy and fun, being flexible and learning parenting skills.

Across all initiatives, when asked about recommended improvements, most parents who were interviewed and surveyed were satisfied with their ECE provision and reiterated positive comments, e.g.,

> Thank you for your question, my only thought on it is this preschool is good especially for our Samoan children here. I am happy to serve for this preschool because I have learnt a lot from here as well as my children. (SP mum, interview)

> I am more than happy with what we have been informed with so therefore I have no improvements to share. (EPF parent, survey)

> I don't have experienced with the early childhood education but I am willing to take part as I know it helps with any parents towards their children in the future. (EPF parent, survey)

> The EPF initiative gave me motivation to be involved with my child's education and I have realised the importance of my child attending kindy and how my child will benefit from this in her future education. (EPF parent, survey)

> I think [centre] is great. Staff are wonderful and reliable van driver. Thanx [centre], u rule. (TAP parent, survey)

Very few comments were made through survey by HB and ILCCE parents so these are not included.

Suggestions for improvement

Nevertheless, some suggestions for improvement were offered both by parents surveyed and those who were interviewed.

EPF

Several EPF parents wanted other families and their own children under two years to be supported.

> For the programme to continue on not only for me, however, for other little ones that need help also. (EPF parent, survey)

> To keep it going because I found it very helpful for me and my child. I think the under 2's need to be funded as well cause it's hard for us parents it will be great to get this started. (EPF parent, survey)

A few EPF parents wanted more information about their child's learning.

> Keep me update with what my child have achieve or not achieve [sic] so I can be aware of it. (EPF parent, survey)

> Just want my child to come home with some homework (EPF parent, survey)

Two EPF families wanted support for safety or from a social worker.

> More safety stuff around for the kids since they all really active. (EPF parent, survey)

> More social workers, they know what they are doing. Once a month visit. (EPF parent, survey)

Some EPF parents raised general ECE policy issues. These were about

- the value of universal free ECE;

> I would recommend that all ECE services to [have] no fees & to provide food for all the children that are enrolled (EPF parent, survey).

- local provision in all communities where it is needed;

> I would love if kindies had more funding for transportation. You have some mothers who do not have transportations. I have my cousin who walks her son to school and it's a 40-minute walk each way. Some kindies should have funding available or mums should have some help with that. My cousin chooses not to take her son to kindy because she cannot walk all the way. Her son won't go in a pram, because he says he is not a baby. She said there is no way in hell she is going to make him walk all that way. And there's only a few kindies around there, and the kindies have waiting lists. There's not many kindies in certain areas. I moved to Manurewa so I could be near the schools. I think the kids should go to the same schools. I had so many schools all over the motu. It is a key to their success. (EPF mum, interview)

HB

Two of eight HB parents would have preferred the coordinator support to have been provided to them rather than to the caregiver, in the manner of the Ministry of Social Development's Home Instruction Programme for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY). These parents were eager to find out what their child was learning and loved the child's portfolio. Another HB parent said the promised visits and support did not happen frequently enough.

Parents from the TAP-funded HB service were very positive about the provision and three of six parents said their children asked for the educator in weekends and holidays. Their main suggestion was for a central place where educators and parents could go together with the children. One parent would like more resources (papers, drawing materials) and another would like a climbing frame in the educator's home because her child loved to climb.

SP

The main needs for SP parents were for transport, a permanent venue and better resources.

Ten of 83 parents surveyed (12%) and one of 13 parents interviewed wrote about a need for transport. For example,

> Transport. Sometimes we can't afford our petrol. (SP parent interview)

Four of 13 parents interviewed and three of 83 parents surveyed recommended improvements to the playgroup building and children's equipment. They particularly wanted a permanent venue. Typical comments were as follows:

> I think I don't like the playgroup using the venue, is not stable, you can't decorate, you have to pack up—that's one thing. If the playgroup got even a really little place that is more stable then the

> families and children got more belonging because you can feel like placing the children's pictures—if you need to set up and pack away every day you can't do much about it. (SP parent interview)

> Improve the learning environment. I hope playgroup can run like playcentre, have stable place, have stable set up and do not need to pack up every day. As a migrant, I hope we can find a place to speak our own language. Encourage other migrant to come together learn NZ cultures. (SP parent survey)

> Have more space for kids to play. Have more toys and resources. Have a lunch bar for kids to buy their lunch. (SP parent survey)

Thirdly a few (4) playgroup parents recommended staffing improvements, mainly around teacher pay and qualifications, for example:

> Also I think the coordinator need more training, like me, my background is not education but after about 1 and 1/2 year I look back—I improve a lot, I know a lot, after training, ongoing training. (SP parent interview)

Three parents surveyed wanted more parenting courses and to understand the programme better.

TAP

Recommendations from TAP parents were mainly about cost and hours. These were mainly from the one provider.

> Extend 20 hours of education. Provide more funding for parents and provide adult education free. (TAP parent survey)

> It's good for parents they have short finance. Less fees. Need more hours for kids who are under ECE. (TAP parent survey)

> Lower costs.… Better information about the centre and about the 20hrs ECE free. (TAP parent survey)

A few parents made recommendations about the programme.

> More involvement with my child in outdoor play. (TAP parent survey)

> Multicultural environment would be good. (TAP parent survey)

In summary, the suggestions for improvement were few compared with the overall positive comments about the initiatives and ECE services. Families' basic and predominant needs were for ECE provision that was free or low cost and affordable, locally available or with transport provided.

Other barriers to participation

Parents' responses in interviews and surveys showed that their satisfaction with the ECE accessed through the Participation Programme was linked to help with overcoming the barriers that were making participation difficult for them. Cost was the predominant barrier, followed by transport. ILCCE providers worked with some service managers to support them to restructure their fee schedules so that families could access 20 hours free ECE for 3- and 4-year-olds. EPF providers gathered information about costs of ECE services in their community and explained cost structures to families, avoiding those that were too expensive. New services established through participation initiatives—supported playgroups, TAP-funded ECE services and home-based ECE were free or low cost. These findings raise questions about whether conditions on receipt of 20 hours ECE funding could be made to ensure families are able to access 20 hours ECE at no or minimal costs in every ECE service. Lack of locally available ECE and transport were being addressed by some providers who offered a van to collect and return the child. Parents and providers in Stage 2 identified some additional barriers to participation in ECE, though these were not as prevalent as cost, transport and locally available ECE.

Developing a sense of safety, trust

Both providers and parents talked about the lack of a sense of safety for parents leaving their child or children in an unfamiliar environment with strangers. Providers and parents said that it was essential to establish trusting relationships with key people in order to feel comfortable in the 'new' ECE environment. Providers talked about families, in particular Māori families as being whakama or shy or lacking confidence.

> It's all about building trust and relationships around their child.… [ECE van drivers]

> A lot of them are so whakama. For a lot of them it's all foreign to them. And a lot of our parents never went to a kindy … they were just dropped off on their first day of school and that's the experience that they had and that's the experience that they were going to have for their baby. [EPF provider]

> They [parents] need to feel comfortable; you know, you walk into a home and you feel welcome … they have to put their trust into strangers, their children. [EPF provider]

> Part of our relationship is more than just education for the child, it is support the parent and their whole life situation to get them into a place that they feel safe and they have like a haven and it's developing that relationship. [SP provider]

Parents talked about difficulties they had passing over the care of their children to another person and the importance of trusting that person or feeling comfortable in the ECE environment.

> Whenever my kids are away from me—when they are at school [playgroup] I know they are safe but I have that feeling I have to go and check they are okay. I trust the teacher and I trust the playgroup. [SP parent interview]

> He's always been with me; I've never let him go.… It was more of me letting go of him. I've always had him with me—everywhere I go—it was just that parting thing. I knew he was well ready when he was about three but it was still like I don't want him going. [EPF parent interview]

> … after being there and watching, there are some really naughty kids there, I see that it is way different than what I thought it would be. I can relax—know if they did do something wrong that

> they would just be talked to and settled down and then they could go off and play again. [EPF parent interview]

One parent said that although she had got used to leaving her child for 20 hours, she was having difficulty with the idea of extending these hours.

> I decided he won't go until he gets his ECE hours, then when they started up I was pretty happy after that. At the moment he goes for 20. I am waiting for WINZ to get back to me, to change the hours because I am studying. Then I'm still a bit rocky leaving him that long hours. I still don't have the heart for that; I've got to get used to that. Four hours is good enough for me. I feel like a bad mother leaving him there all day. [ILCCE/EPF parent interview]

Several parents had had bad experiences with ECE previously and needed to build up confidence that their child would be well cared for and safe.

Asked what good quality would look like, one of these parents said:

> Safety. Just in terms of the people that are taking care of her. That they've been security vetted, that they've gone through all the necessary processes in line with MOE. If you're going to send your kids then worry about them all day, what's the point of you sending them?

How and to what extent trust was developed

Providers talked about relationship building as essential to building trust and SP providers told of different ways in which they accommodated their playgroups to the needs of different parent groups in order to provide a familiar and therefore safe environment. Building trust was said to be a slow process.

> I suppose the biggest barrier is trust—to develop this relationship with the parents because we are looking at the parents that are hard to reach, and the parents that have grandparents. Part of having their children stay with the grandparents is that the children can have the cultural learning from the grandparents, have the language … a lot of them don't drive; to manage them and get them to playgroup can be quite difficult.… We have found being able to pick them up; providing transport.… It's great they have been able to have the same language so they can speak to the grandparents too … when you have someone who can speak the language then the grandparents can come up with the children. [SP provider]

> But it is getting the parents because they are "what do I want to come there for", "what am I going to get when I come there". It's changing mindsets and also changing … mindsets to parents about who is responsible for their children…. We are talking about if you are already at home come along with your child where we can provide opportunities for them. For the mothers once they do come, the feedback from our coordinators is, if they can last the first two months, then, that's how long it takes to develop a relationship. Sometimes it's not even coming those two months it's you visiting the home. Just drop in and see how they are going—it takes that length of time to develop the relationship, gain the trust and then they will come. It's a long haul process to be able to get those parents to trust you. [SP provider]

> The time it takes to build a trusting relationship with whānau is always different. Usually takes 3–5 pre-visits with child, parent and myself at ECE service to start feeling at ease and safe. [EPF provider]

> Intense trust building; need this to happen for whānau, they need to feel a trusting relationships, and they need us to acknowledge them as a package, with their tamariki. [TAP provider]

High needs

Providers reported the high needs of some families as a barrier to participation in ECE, and said that these needs generally had to be addressed in some way before families could attend ECE services. Providers noted that it was essential they were able to broker support for families.

> A lot of them are on the benefit so they're just getting minimum wage.… We work with some parents who have big families who are all under the age of five … rent, food, power those sorts of things that our parents struggle with; the basics. [EPF provider]

> Some of it is, too, that they haven't always had good contact with the outside—with others or agencies, so they are not very trusting. A lot of our parents are on various benefits and they worry that coming to this service, because having to give information about yourself, they are not too sure if that is going to get them into strife; there are those barriers and hurdles we have to get over. [SP provider]

> You need to find someone who you can trust with the social side of things. To resolve this barrier you need to be trusted with the social barriers to support the side. How can you teach a child if they are hungry? There was a whānau that has five kids but wouldn't send them to ECE because there was no food. [ILCCE provider]

How and the extent to which high needs can be addressed

Providers, particularly EPF providers, said that the intensive nature of the programme and the length of time they worked with families meant they had the time to address families' needs, often engaging other social services such as Housing New Zealand, WINZ and CYF to deal with things such as housing, finances and social issues. In addition developing a trusting relationship with families helped providers to find out about and so address different issues.

> From past experience, it's been the high needs with social issues … they are so overwhelmed they are just "can't do this anymore". But now I see a shift because this programme is more intensive and the majority of our clients are like that and we have capacity to get really involved with them and it's not just for 12 weeks, we can actually support them with their needs. [EPF provider]

> Our coordinator there has a good relationship with the marae, they run different programmes…. We had a playgroup established … great partnership and also a budgetary service that operates out of there and the coordinator there is great in introducing any of the parents that come in for support from the foodbank. [SP provider]

TAP and SP providers said it was important that the mix of staff reflected the community they worked with in order to connect with families. As one provider said to reach families they needed to

> Ensure that the SP coordinator is of that culture and that the delivery is bicultural. [SP provider]

However, providers did comment that there were limitations around reducing the needs of families. For example, EPF providers said they were contractually limited in the age group they were able to work with, which created some difficulties when working with often-large families.

> We do intensive casework with whānau, however this contract is limited in offering and addressing the educational needs of three and four year olds only. [EPF provider]

Providers also commented that there were wider systemic issues such as poor housing and child health, which were beyond their reach. These were said to contribute to a lack of motivation on the part of some families to engage in ECE.

> Motivation, whānau lack this, incentive, whānau don't see end result as an incentive or drive to invest time and energy into education, maybe because of their own childhood inadequacies or experiences. [SP provider]

Transience was also said to be a major issue for providers working with some families who moved either for work reasons or to new accommodation, resulting in poor attendance at ECE services.

> So four months might be the time they are involved with us before they find work or accommodation somewhere else. Or move out altogether—that's been our problem with [this] area, retaining families because there is the high transience. [SP provider]

> Had one little boy who they said moved.… He already had, when he started here, four different aliases for his name so I don't know.… What we could gather he seems to go places for a couple of months and then disappear. [TAP 3 provider]

How effectively have the programme and the initiatives matched family aspirations and needs to provision?

Overall, from parents' viewpoints, with the exception of home-based, the initiatives have been successful in matching family needs to provision. Home-based was not the preferred choice for some parents who had wanted a parenting programme for themselves, although it did suit some other families. Providers also spoke of wanting to offer coordinator support to parents as well as home-based educators. The parents whom we surveyed and interviewed were using the initiatives offered and so we did not find out about unmet need from parents not involved in the initiatives.

We did not have evidence of whether parents' aspirations had been met for their children for "a good life" and "to follow their dreams", but many parents spoke of their child's happiness at being in ECE. If the programmes offered are of high quality, then we would expect children to develop learning dispositions and in a range of learning areas of importance to parents (e.g., literacy, music). Some SP parents expressed concerns about not having a permanent building, the quality of resources and staffing. Seven percent of those surveyed and interviewed wanted a permanent building so that they did not have to pack up every day, could leave children's work on walls and could help generate a sense of playgroup belonging. They also expressed a need for improved children's equipment and resources. A few (four parents) recommended that staff be qualified and have better pay, and one also recommended ongoing professional development. Twelve percent of parents recommended transport be provided.

All initiatives were addressing family needs for an ECE service that was low cost or free—SP, HB and TAP-funded services were provided at minimal or no cost to parents and EPF providers referred parents to low cost provisions, brokered fee arrangements with some ECE services, or bypassed ECE services that were unaffordable. Similarly, ILCCE providers helped the services they worked with to adjust their costs and hours to better suit families. Need for transport was met in some instances, but remained a need for some parents.

In addition, we found that EPF providers were addressing a wide range of the complex needs of many EPF families, most often helping to address needs such as for housing, income support, food parcels, and financial advice before moving on to ECE. Nevertheless, families' needs for support with their under 3-year-olds remained. Some SP and TAP provisions were providing food. SP was generating a sense of community and linking families with community networks.

Overall, the barriers to ECE participation reported in Stage 1 of cost and personal barriers, such as not knowing how to enrol, were largely being addressed, either through ECE service provision (TAP, SP and HB), the provider finding a suitable service (EPF), making public the range of ECE services in a community (ICPP), or supporting a service to change its fee structures and become more responsive (ILCCE). Most parents wanted to use an ECE service near their home but in some communities they were limited in their choice. This was said to be due to limited provision generally, ECE services with long waiting lists, limited types of ECE services for family needs and requirements, and ECE services which were not responsive to families with high support needs. These are barriers that the Participation Programme was set up to address. They have had some success to date. However, some solutions being found through provision of initiatives, such as a supported playgroup in a predominantly Māori community (Stage 1 report), have not attracted the many families living in the locality who do not want to stay with their child but nevertheless are deemed to be 'priority'. We do not have data from families who are not participating in ECE or from the many families who have 'exited' an initiative for unknown reasons.

Parental involvement in early learning in ECE

Involvement of parents with the ECE service may enable teachers and parents jointly to develop greater understanding of the child and parents to learn more about their powerful role in their child's learning and development and ways to support these. When parents and teachers work together in the interests of the child and hold shared educational aims, activities and experiences in the home and ECE setting can be provided to reinforce each other. Involvement may also hook parents in to sustaining their child's participation in ECE (Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003; Mitchell, 2006; Siraj-Blatchford, 2004; Whalley & the Pen Green Centre Team, 2007). *Kei Tua o te Pae. Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars* (Ministry of Education, 2005) emphasised the value of families being part of the assessment and evaluation of the curriculum and of children's learning and development.

Information from providers about learning and development

The parent survey asked what learning support parents received from their initiative provider as well ways they were involved in the ECE of their children. Over 60% of SP parents surveyed marked that their SP provided resources to use with their child (e.g., books, paints, paper, puzzles, blocks), suggested how parents could use natural resources or make resources to help their child learn, suggested ideas for outings, e.g., library, museum, zoo, showed learning activities that could be done at home and suggested ways to manage the child's behaviour. Some 40% of SP parents were also helped to establish a regular bedtime for their child. EPF parents stood out for most having an Early Learning Plan for their child, a requirement for this initiative. All HB parents surveyed had resources provided for their child.

Supporting parent engagement with ECE services

We asked survey families to indicate what sort of involvement they had with their child's ECE service. Parents selected all the activities they were involved with. Overall, the most common involvement was families bringing their child to the ECE service, although only 57% marked that they did this. The levels of parental involvement in planning (across all initiatives) were lower than those found in the NZCER 2007 national survey of ECE services (Mitchell, 2008) where 55% of parents contributed to planning, assessment and evaluation compared with 30% in

this survey who contributed to planning. However, we note that the question asked in the NZCER national survey was somewhat broader than the question asked here. Only 29% of parents overall marked that they provided information about their child to the teacher. SP parents who responded appeared the most involved across the range of categories, which is to be expected as SPs are designed to be attended by the parent and child together.

Table 7: Surveyed parents' involvement in the ECE service by initiative

Type of involvement	EPF (n=119)	TAP (n=98)	SP (n=83)	HB* (n=8)	TOTAL (n=308)	Types differing markedly from overall
Bring child n (%)	73 (61)	41 (42)	56 (68)	3 (38)	175 (57)	HB (38%) TAP 42%)
Collect child n (%)	69 (58)	33 (34)	27 (33)	2 (25)	133 (43)	HB (25%)
Stay with child n (%)	11 (9)	6 (6)	43 (52)	1 (13)	61 (20)	SP (52%)
Act as parent help n (%)	28 (24)	13 (13)	41 (49)	1 (13)	83 (27)	SP 49%)
On committee n (%)	1 (1)	3 (3)	12 (15)	0	16 (5)	SP (15%)
Other volunteer work n (%)	14 (12)	10 (10)	24 (29)	0	48 (16)	SP (29%) HB (0%)
Provide info about child n (%)	40 (34)	22 (22)	27 (33)	1 (13)	90 (29)	HB (13%)
Talk with teacher about child n (%)	66 (56)	42 (43)	31 (37)	3 (38)	144 (47)	
Borrow toys and books n (%)	8 (7)	2 (2)	21 (25)	2 (25)	33 (11)	SP (25%) HB (25%)
Take part in planning for child n (%)	47 (40)	14 (14)	32 (39)	1 (13)	94 (30)	TAP (14%) HB (13%)
Ideas to support child's learning n (%)	54 (45)	20 (20)	39 (47)	2 (25)	115 (37)	TAP (20%) HB (25%)
Other n (%)	6 (5)	4 (4)	4	0	14 (5)	

** Note very low numbers.*

EPF initiatives appeared to have relatively low levels of parental involvement in their ECE service. Reasons for relatively low levels of involvement by EPF families may include parents lacking confidence to be involved, having previous poor educational experiences, services not welcoming involvement and parents having other commitments. Provision of transport to the ECE service may be a reason why some EPF parents have limited or no contact with the service.

TAP. Overall, the TAP families seem to have less involvement in their ECE service. This could be a by-product of the high level of families who utilise the transport provided and therefore miss out on forming a relationship with the centre. This could also be skewed by the large response from one particular provider who did have vans servicing families who were unable to access transport.

SP. Overall, SP parents were involved in the service—in bringing and staying with the child, being involved in the programme and planning processes, using ideas and resources from the playgroup to support their child's learning, and offering volunteer help. This reflects the nature of SP design, in which attendance by both parent and child is expected.

Interviews with SP, HB and EPF parents provided some additional insight regarding the nature of parental involvement in ECE.

In a supported playgroup, a parent spoke of parents engaging in activities and learning alongside their children.

> [Exercise books] each child has one; they fill it in every day. The parents really like that. They take it home once they are full. And at the end of the year they take it. Specially our PI parents, they don't usually get into those kind of things. When they first start going to playgroup there's like attitude, as they start sitting with their children, doing things with their children, you start getting the parents sticking things in and like the kids come along and crayon, the parents are cutting out. We finish at 12.30 every day but we are still there at one o'clock 'cos the parents don't want to miss a thing and anything now—a child can do four pictures—they'll get those pictures in the books. Also things from outside—shells … then they take it home to their families and they write the feedback from the families into the books and they come back and are really into it. (SP mum interview)

A Fijian mother spoke of her contribution of Fijian songs and bible stories to the programme.

> Most of the time I leave it up to the main one [the coordinator] but when I am available I go in there and help. On Sunday I am the leader of our Sunday school—it is like a Fijian Sunday school, but a mixture [of cultures]. I am taking that. I teach them from my own parent view to the kids—the bible, sing songs together, the good behaviour and in terms of the bad behaviour. I tell you they listen. I really enjoy the kids now 'cos I know how to get into them—it's more like teaching my kids the good behaviour and bad behaviours so they know the difference. (SP mum interview)

In another supported playgroup, one mother talked of the resources and activities available for children and opportunities for parents to learn.

> It's awesome—there's nothing you can't do with your kid. There's bubbles and paint and picture drawing, games, bats, balls, bikes, skipping ropes, blocks, books galore. So sad that people don't see all that stuff instead of sitting at home with your kid crying and putting the toilet paper in the toilet and blocking the sink. This is my son, we didn't have playgroup today because the teacher had something to do. He blocked the bathroom sink and touched everything he wasn't allowed and the house has been cleaned three times since this morning. (SP mum interview)

> We cook—supposed to be cupcakes and that but we've turned it into a mother's hub and we are starting to share ideas on meals and teach each other how to make like chicken fettuccine—we all bring stuff—someone brings the cream and someone brings the chicken the bacon—it's cool 'cos [we] got own kitchen area…. (SP mum interview)

Home-based parents interviewed had varying experiences depending on the provider. In one, where TAP funding was used to set up a home-based scheme, parents communicated with the provider in a range of ways, by Facebook, text, email, and some visits.

> He [coordinator] comes and I probably text, email or talk once or twice a week. If there's something going on he'll always let me know, the communication's great.… Even the drivers that come to pick up the kids, they're always in the loop, they'll ring me to say that they're going to be late. (HB mum, A group interview)

> Or if you're running late, send them a text. (HB mum, B group interview)

> And that's the easiest thing, is to text. It's easier, you don't have to contact, you don't have to have loads of credit just to send a text. That's probably one of the main issues is money problems for myself because I'm a single mum, the kids don't see their dad at all so any little bit helps. And with them providing lunch sometimes when you don't have it or you're rushed off your feet, all you need to do is tell the driver and that's fine, they'll organise that for the day. That's what it's all about, that's what makes this programme so attractive to women who are trying to get out there in the workforce and make their own lives as well as keep the kids happy. (HB mum A, group interview)

Previous experiences (outside of the Participation Programme) had put one of these HB parents off ECE. The HB coordinator identified with her experience and helped her choose an appropriate ECE service.

> I didn't want to put her in anything after that. I was just nup, not even kindy until [the HB coordinator] came and he'd been through the same thing. There were a lot of centres I didn't trust but … a lot of choices he had to make and I felt like I was in the same boat and he reassured me why the kids are here right now. (HB mum, A group interview)

In this new HB setting, the parent using HB was satisfied with the educator's approach, saying that the educator wrote in the portfolio what the child did that day "and then the drivers will just bring it back or they'll put something else in so I can see what they've been doing that month or that year". Parents made small contributions to the portfolio.

In contrast, a home-based father whose children had been in CYFS care had wanted a "more Kip McGrath orientated, more educational development [programme]" but thought the programme was focused on providing toys (which he said they had plenty of). He was anxious to know whether his children would meet standards and not struggle at school.

> What they said in their service is that they would visit once a month for two hours and do an in-home visit and every week they would make a weekly phone call for a catch up and evaluation. We don't get any weekly phone calls and monthly visitation, they just drop off a couple of toys and hi how are you? (HB dad interview).

In some ECE services, ways were found to communicate with EPF families when they did not themselves take their child to the ECE service.

> When you talk to the van driver and stuff, they were really … 'cause the van driver is always the daycare teacher there as well. And so she's one of the day care teachers and so we'd, when she'd drop [child] off she'd seen [child's] whole progress over the whole day. And one of the day care teachers absolutely adored [child] and so we'd be hearing updates about [child] like how she was today and what happened and stuff like that.… She got a huge portfolio from that one, with all her artwork and photos of her doing learning new things, like playing in the water or … like when she's learnt new things they'd take a photo of it and then record it. (EPF mum interview)

The EPF provider sometimes acted as liaison with the ECE service, doing work with the child and family at home that was then taken to the ECE service.

> [The EPF] person is the one that liaises with me. She spends more time with the boys at kindy than she does at home. Just to see, when we work our three-month plan she then emphasises that with the lady at kindy—she goes to see what they are doing, the theme and that. Like she is due to see the boys at this kindy this week. We are working on their ABCs, identifying their letters. That's

> what we are working on. [Child] is going to school soon. I want him to write his name. He can recognise his name, pull it out of a pile of names, that's what they emphasised at [kindergarten]. But he can't write his name. That's goal to achieve in the next three months. So she [EPF person] has laminated a copy of their name so he writes underneath, traces over it first with a whiteboard marker, then he will write underneath it. (EPF mum interview)

One question is whether this liaison may actually inhibit parents from being directly involved themselves.

Where parents did have contact with the service, they participated when invited.

> The staff are friendly, they involve us, [child's] parents, with any activities that are happening. On culture days, the parents were involved with providing Samoan food. (EPF mum interview)

How well do the initiatives support engagement with ECE and with children's learning and development?

In summary, all initiatives support families to enrol their children in ECE in some form, but there is some variability in the extent to which they support engagement with ECE and with children's learning and development.

SP seems to be very effective in encouraging engagement of families, as the SP design is for a parent or family caregiver to be present at the playgroup with their children. Many SP parents surveyed participated in the programme and used ideas for activities and resources to use at home. Interviews suggested that this happened through the families watching others, and being encouraged to participate themselves. SP parents were encouraged to learn not only about their child's learning and development and the role they could play but also to pursue their own continued learning, such as a playgroup mum who was learning te reo, reading and writing from the SP provider (reported in Stage 1). Similar outcomes for parents participating in playgroups were found in the *Quality in Parent Whānau-led Services* research undertaken in 2006 (Mitchell, Royal Tangaere, Mara, & Wylie, 2006), mediated through processes of adult education opportunities, involvement in the programme, modelling and being part of the community. We did not have the opportunity to assess the quality of advice and support offered.

The engagement of EPF and TAP families with ECE traversed a broad spectrum and was dependent on the people in the ECE service where the child was enrolled, whether the parent brought the child to the service or transport was provided, and the efforts made by EPF providers and ECE services to broker connections. Providing transport might help ensure the child attended ECE, but could hamper parents from being involved if deliberate efforts are not made to invite participation. Some providers were using people (teachers as van drivers) and portfolios to connect families with ECE services that their child attended.

Most HB parents knew their HB educator and made connections with home. But there were differences in ways in which these parents were engaged in their child's learning and development that seemed to be a function of the opportunities offered by coordinators, their relationship with the family, and their professional expertise.

Responding to needs for quality

Research-informed scope on indicators of quality

Good quality ECE has been shown to be key to enhancing learning and development for children, and positive outcomes for families and communities. Two recent literature reviews commissioned by the Ministry of Education (Dalli, White, Rockel, & Duhn, 2011; Mitchell, Wylie, & Carr, 2008) have shown that the quality of teacher/educator interactions and opportunities afforded by the environment are crucial in supporting gains. The *Outcomes of ECE Literature Review* (Mitchell et al., 2008) showed aspects that are particularly important for outcomes are

- the quality of teacher-child interaction;
- the learning resources available;
- programmes that engage children; and
- a supportive environment for children to work together. (p. 5)

Conditions were found to support quality teaching and learning and these were represented diagrammatically. At the heart were found to be three characteristics that mutually reinforced each other, contributing to quality outcomes for children and empowered families. Intentional teaching was a term used to describe "settings that provide opportunities for 'sustained shared thinking', rich teacher-child interactions, engaging programmes, peers learning together, and assessments with valued outcomes in mind" (p. 7). Children's learning was best supported when family engagement with ECE teachers and programmes, and social/cultural capital and interests from home were both included. The curriculum was complex, involving both cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions.

Likewise Dalli et al.'s (2011) literature review on *Quality Early Childhood Education for Under-two-year-olds* found:

> The overwhelming consensus across research is that the role of the teacher is of primary significance. The pedagogy initiated by the teacher is therefore at centre stage. (p. 3)

Structural features or "facilitating conditions" have been found to support teaching and learning, especially qualified teachers with up-to-date professional understanding, low adult:child ratios, small group size, good working conditions, and teacher professional development and mentoring opportunities in both literature reviews.

The Stage 2 evaluation gathered data from provider and parent interviews and parent surveys on views of quality ECE. It therefore provides a relatively narrow perspective on the quality of provisions. We gain some insight by comparing these with research-informed characteristics of quality. Parents responding to the parent survey were asked, "What three things come into your mind when you think about what a good quality ECE would look like for your child and you?" A similar but more open question was asked in interview, i.e., "What would good quality ECE look like to you?" Providers were asked in interview, "What is your understanding of high quality in ECE?" (characteristics, structural features) and "What do parents tell you about what things they look for about quality in ECE services? What discussions do you have? Any information given? What comes from that?"

What are parents' views on quality?

Quality in ECE for families can take on very different forms depending on the family and what is important to them at the time. One thing we found through the family survey was that the idea of quality did not necessarily relate to the education of the child, but more to how the provider or service was helping the family. Some of these patterns are discussed below.

EPF. One hundred and nineteen EPF families completed the survey. The most predominant feature of quality that was mentioned was the environment (62 or 52.1%). This included the appearance of the centre, being decorated in bright colours and examples of children's work, having indoor and outdoor play areas, to more fundamental concerns as to safety and cleanliness. In addition to these things, feeling welcome, safe and happy were expressed. As shown in other survey questions and family interviews over this stage of the evaluation, relationships with, and the support of, the provider have been shown to be one of the most valued aspects of the EPF initiative. This is also reflected in the comments about quality for the EPF families with the interpersonal quality of centre staff being frequently commented on (41 or 34.5%). Again, this falls into being welcomed, being able to trust that children are in a safe place and possibly helping to remove some of the issues around previous bad experiences with education. Also important to EPF families were the resources and activities provided by the ECE centre (33, 27.7%). Comments included gaining access to things they were unable to have at home and having exposure to different activities and outings that may not have been possible without attending the centre. Teaching and learning was another aspect commonly commented on in regards to quality. This related to things such as having an early learning plan, having some structure and consistency in the teaching and being able to see their child learning and developing from the experiences they were getting through ECE. Additional to this were comments around social skills, learning to play, adjustments to behaviour and development.

The six aspects above were the most commented on when asked about ECE quality for EPF, but not the only ones. Additionally, there were comments around the professionalism of the service, the communication and support received, transport and cost (two of the main barriers faced by families), children having fun and being happy, parenting support, language, community and culture, food and teacher to child ratio.

Overall, there is a picture about quality from the EPF responses that mirrors other aspects of the evaluation. Parents see quality as a safe, welcoming space they can leave their children, with friendly, understanding staff. Resources and opportunity are valued as is learning and teaching.

Most EPF parents interviewed do not have regular ongoing contact within the centre, but rather engage with the van drivers on pick up and drop off. Based on this context, during most interviews parents indicated that they have only been in to enrol their child and did not engage with the centre on a regular basis. When questioned about quality aspects during interviews most of these EPF parents indicated the points mentioned above but struggled to comment of the quality of ECE provided to their child, based on their limited experience and exposure.

TAP. Some of the same things can be seen in the comments about quality from TAP family surveys. The aspect most (43.9%) commented on was the environment the service provided, with safety, colour and having outdoors areas all mentioned. Although the environment was the most commented on factor, it was still a far smaller percentage of the respondents than for the EPF families. Teaching and learning including structure, formal plans and routine were highlighted by just over a third (34.5%) of the TAP families, with a similar percentage of responses about interpersonal attributes of centre staff (33.7%), which included friendliness, caring and attentiveness to the children in their care. Other perceived indicators of quality that were often mentioned by families were the resources and activities available (16.3%), the communication and support from the centre (14.3%), that there were qualified or "good" teachers (12.2%) and the provision of transport (10.2%).

Interview data gathered from TAP families indicates that most feel that having a good environment with positive teachers and happy children is an indicator for quality for them. They indicated that if their children were happy and engaged then they were happy with the quality.

SP. Parent surveys completed by the supported playgroup families once again have the environment as number one in their comment about quality. With 60.2% of families commenting on this aspect, this is by far the highest percentage of comments on any aspect in any initiative. As supported playgroups are often established in community houses or other buildings that are not specific to ECE and often lack outdoor space and playgrounds, this could explain why this aspect is so predominant in the comments from SP families. Also higher than other initiatives are the number of comments around resources and activities. The reasons for this could be similar to the consideration for the environment. Lower or minimal funding means these are often stretched and as a result, "having more" could be perceived as "higher quality".

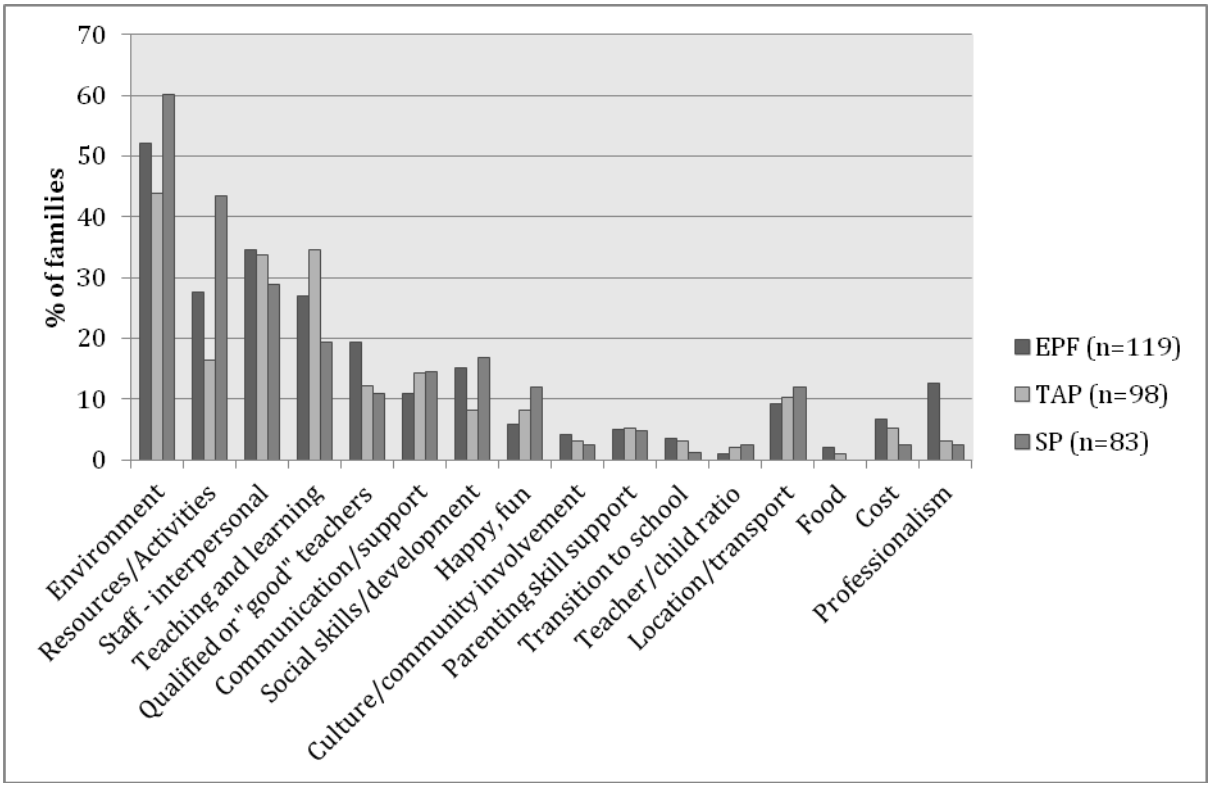
In contrast, the SP families' comments about the interpersonal skills of staff (28.9%) and teaching and learning (19.3%) were lower than for those from EPF (34.5% and 26.9% respectively) or TAP families (33.7% and 34.5% respectively). They were still the third and fourth most commented on aspects for SP but did not seem to have the attention for the families that environment and resources did. Supported playgroup families made comments around quality that reflected social aspects of their children's learning (16.9%), communication and support from the service (14.5%) and having children having fun and being happy (12%). Families commented on location and transport reasonably frequently (12%). Interestingly, with the design of supported playgroup being community based and focused, responsive to the cultural needs of the families they capture, only 2.4% of the families made any comment about this in regards to quality. Possibly, because the families attending reflect the community already, this is not an issue at the forefront for these families.

Data gathered from interviews indicate that parents would like friendly and approachable staff with a general feeling of welcoming and belonging to the centre. They preferred a range of activities and resources that provided fun and engaging learning opportunities for their children.

> Actually it is very simple if you don't go think about the academic side—happy teacher, happy child. Good teacher—good quality, good value, good education, good learning environment, that is clean, but for me I think happy teacher, happy child. (Interview with a supported playgroup parent)

Figure 4 shows graphically the importance placed by parent respondents on the environment as a characteristic of quality, followed by interpersonal interactions and teaching and learning. Some initiative differences in response are apparent. A higher percentage of TAP parents talked of teaching and learning, and a lower percentage talked of environment and resources as characteristics of quality, although these were still very important features for many TAP parents.

Figure 4: Percentage of parents commenting on characteristics of quality



What are providers' views of quality?

Providers were asked in interview what good quality would look like. In total there were 13 interviews: four from EPF, three from SP, three from HB, two from TAP, and one ILCCE.

Providers' views towards quality varied depending on their own experiences and engagement with the ECE sector as well as the overall approach of their initiative. All providers indicated a strong desire for the best services for their families and made significant attempts to engage their families with ECE provision that met families' needs.

EPF. The four EPF providers acknowledged the importance of ECE experiences for young children, particularly in the long-term aspirations of better preparing children for school and their educational future. Most commented on quality characteristics of staff that would encourage and attract families, such as a warm, friendly environment with teachers who were approachable, engaged and had some cultural knowledge to assist their relationship building with the families.

In addition, interview data revealed the need for centres to provide a range of educational experiences or activities for the children alongside a warm, friendly, welcoming environment with staff who are culturally responsive to engage the families.

> High quality equates to the quality of the teachers and their knowledge base … because my observation during this project are that the more that the teacher knows in terms of their own cultural knowledge and other cultural peoples knowledge … makes a difference in their delivery, it's like a performer … you can tell a performer who's been around and knows their stuff and one that's not so certain about it. (EPF provider interview)

Supported Playgroup. Similar to EPF providers, SP providers emphasised the importance of an inviting, warm, non-judgemental and friendly environment. A provider working with Pasifika families emphasised congruency with the families' culture.

> What [parents] have said is—the environment, that it is very inviting, it displays different multi cultures or things they can relate to whether it is a display of some hats or some mats or … they have that association. The children—a friendly smile and greeting from the coordinator is wonderful. To be able to come into an atmosphere that is non-judgemental, not just the coordinator, but everyone else that is there as well. Also there is no expectancy that they have all things when they come. (SP provider interview)

A provider working mainly with Māori families said:

> Friendly and approachable, the staff. I guess you get a good feeling when you go into the centre you know like if it's a warm environment. I think you can tell when you walk into a centre whether it's the right one or not. (SP provider interview)

Children's enjoyment for being in the service and the learning environment need to be visible. One provider emphasised these aspects and the agency of children in creating their environment.

> The children, that you hear laughter and children having fun and mixing well together and there are a lot of activities provided for them. That the children have their work displayed and they are part of the process of developing that—you know what goes up and what comes down. Half of our playgroups are set up permanently—they are able to set up permanently but children change that regularly. That to us is success that children come in and decide, you know they want to put all the creative play and shift it, change the place, or turn it into a big castle. (SP provider interview)

Quality encompassed families not only children.

> That families feel they are supported in other things than just education. (SP provider interview)

HB. Home-based provider interviews indicated that services needed to not only meet regulatory needs but also develop strong relationships between the child, family and caregiver.

> The first thing that I look at is the relationships. And that's core to our philosophy. I think that if that's good and everybody you know … it's a respectful relationship, everybody's interacting and got that strong sense of wellbeing and belonging then the learning will take place. And that to me is evident very strongly within the learning journals and like I said when I go and visit it's evident within the closeness of the relationships. (HB provider interview)

TAP. TAP providers indicated quality was meeting the families' needs with regards to reducing barriers to participation, particularly transport and food. The provider survey showed that many TAP providers have introduced van services to pick up and drop off children to eliminate those barriers. Information gathered from interviews indicates a strong sense of being flexible and adaptive to the families' situation and particular needs. This included ongoing conversations about how to make the child more comfortable in the centre as they transition them in to eliminate the potential risk of leaving ECE altogether.

One TAP provider who was interviewed argued for higher than regulated teacher:child ratios and some form of structure and routine within the programme as features of quality.

The second TAP provider also pointed to staffing—qualifications, ratios and group size—as features of quality, and relationships with families.

> Well, I believe that it's qualified teachers or expert teachers that are experts in like language and culture. I believe it's good ratios and not big large group sizes. Quality is also about all those things I have talked about before like involving families and being open to learning from families.

This provider emphasised the importance of ensuring that family cultures are reflected and welcomed, and families are treated as individuals. In addition, this provider spoke of learning through exploration of the wider environment outside of the ECE service.

ILCCE. The ILCCE provider conveyed a holistic view of quality in which welcoming spaces were created and where "the child and the family that sits behind that child feel like they are a significant part of that service". The programme incorporates the languages and cultural values of the service families and assessment plays a key role in including parent and whānau voice and portraying learning progression. "Assessments that are richer by recording family and whānau voice where they are not snapshots of what the child has done but a journey of where the child is going." Interview data also indicated that the portfolios were a significant bridge between home and service and enabled the family to see what their child is doing in the service, as well as provide a cultural perspective from the family.

> [Portfolios and family voice] would be universal for all services that are aspiring to be high quality, but particularly for this community it becomes even more important, because your drop off rate can be quite high. So to ensure retention, offering flexibility with fee payments and all those things become important as well. (ILCCE provider interview)

What do providers tell parents about quality in ECE?

Providers' perspectives differed from initiative to initiative as well as being based on the field worker's experience and engagement with the sector. This is likely to impact on the information providers give to parents about quality.

Most again indicated aspects such as if the child is happy, there is food, the child is excited about attending as basic indicators of quality that parents would be able to identify. Some talked about qualifications but one provider warned that sometimes (particularly with EPF) going too deep with parents about the intricacies of child development theory hinders the relationship development. It is evident that providers felt that staff needed to be qualified, or have significant experience and understand how to engage with diverse families. This included the type of language used, the warmth of the individual, the approachableness of the staff and a general ability to engage with parents and family from all walks of life. Some providers also indicated that how clean the environment was would be an indicator to look for as well and how new the resources were.

> To me from somebody coming in to a centre, I want to see the engagement. That's the first thing I look for; trained, untrained, I don't care. Teacher engagement, looking at ways to scaffold the child's learning and you can do that whether trained or not, using different words. That's quality and it's not just their learning it's about their wellbeing, so holistically speaking. (EPF provider interview)

How well do the initiatives and overall programme respond to needs for quality?

Stage 2 interview questions and parent survey data have touched on views of quality. The spectrum of understanding around what is quality varies depending upon experience, engagement and individual background and initiative.

In common, providers and parents highlighted that a welcoming environment with responsive and positive teachers/educators, and a well-resourced environment and activities that promote learning are key features of quality. Parents want to see their child as happy, to be learning and to develop socially.

Parents from supported playgroups were more likely than other parents to emphasise community networks and support as a feature of quality. Community networks were a design feature of this initiative. This finding reflects perhaps that playgroups have great potential to build a socially supportive network of adults and children (Mitchell, Royal Tangaere, Mara, & Wylie, 2006) since parents are present with their children and have opportunity to get to know other families with young children well, make connections with community groups and join new networks. The Pasifika playgroups in the study offered opportunity to interact with others of the same cultural group. These roles are valuable: Jack and Jordan's (1999) synthesis of UK and US research show that incidences of abuse and neglect are associated with families lacking mutually supportive relationships and social support.

Providers, more so than parents, emphasised the importance of teachers/educators having cultural understanding. (See next section on Responsiveness to language and culture for a fuller discussion).

TAP and ILCCE providers were more likely to emphasise staffing as a feature of quality (teacher qualifications and ratios). These are identified in the research literature as structural features or facilitating conditions found to support teaching and learning that lead to quality outcomes for children. In addition, the one ILCCE provider spoke of the role played by assessment in making connections with home and showing learning progression. Her emphasis on assessment that draws on family funds of knowledge, and how assessment can document learning progression reinforces the research-based understanding that a coherent and balanced assessment system can contribute to quality teaching and learning (Carr, Davis, & Cowie, 2013). The TAP and ILCCE providers were all qualified ECE teachers who were working in or with teacher-led services. Their focus may be reflective of the fact that they were appreciative of the place of teacher education and theoretical knowledge in supporting teachers.

Responding to language and culture

Data from provider and family interviews and surveys are used to explore language and cultural aspirations and responsiveness to these. The parent interview asked parents about their needs and hopes for ECE in relation to language and culture. The parent survey did not ask directly but had a general question about the three best things about the ECE service to which some parents responded in relation to language and culture. Providers were asked in survey what processes they use to identify a family's need for ECE to uphold their language and culture. The provider interview went deeper asking:

1. What things do your families look for about identity, language and culture in ECE? Which families?
2. How do you find out about what the priorities are for families with regards to identity, language and culture?
3. In what ways do you see your participation initiative(s) responding to these needs?
4. ***Engaging Priority Families providers and ILCCE providers***—In the time you have been working in this community, what difference, if any, has your initiative made for ECE services in recognising identity language and culture? (Probe: How did this happen?)

Funds of knowledge, cultural capital and cultural responsiveness

Central to the analysis of language, culture and identity is the importance and value placed on critical concepts such as funds of knowledge, cultural capital and cultural responsiveness. These concepts create an epistemological lens from which to interpret research data gathered and presented in this stage of the research.

Funds of knowledge

Funds of knowledge directly relates to the knowledge, language and skills utilised in home environments that when valued and integrated into an educational setting promote respectful, culturally responsive relationships between home and centre (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002). This requires educational environments and staff to be responsive to family diversity, make-up and cultural significances. This also requires staff to develop strong relationships with families to build authentic partnerships. New Zealand's early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996) acknowledges the importance of the child's home environment and the foundations for learning that family provide. This includes their unique contextual knowledge where children's language, culture and identity are situated. A fund of knowledge also provides a rich fabric for children and their families to engage with early educational experiences and offers the opportunity to share their unique understandings with staff and others.

Cultural capital

Becker (2009) refers to cultural capital as an intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge, language and practices inherited by successive generations. Cultural capital draws on previous generations' funds of knowledge and understandings of the world that include language, activities, significant customs and cultural nuisances, practices and expectations (Sullivan, 2001). This knowledge is both indirectly and directly passed down to successive generations in sociocultural rich environments such as children's home and their community.

Cultural capital also relates to Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus where one's lifestyle, values, culture and language within a social setting (home or community) create a sense of unified understanding of social norms. Within this concept young children are engaging in their sociocultural fabric and make-up within their home environments. This enables the successive generations to develop a strong sense of identity based on their cultural capital and funds of knowledge that is reciprocated by all participants within their community.

Cultural responsiveness

Cultural responsiveness relates to the receptiveness of educational environments to language, culture and identity, which is largely encapsulated within funds of knowledge and cultural capital. This concept also looks closely at teaching pedagogy, relationships, power sharing and education—home engagement (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007). Cultural responsiveness is built on a foundation of staff having developed cross-cultural proficiency that reflects the cultural capital and aspirations of diverse families (Bishop & Berryman, 2006).

Cultural responsiveness places responsibility on educational settings to reflect the cultural capital within their community. This includes families and their funds of knowledge. This responsiveness encompasses and encapsulates the principles and strands exemplified by Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996).

What are families' needs for responsiveness to language and culture?

Data from provider and family interviews and surveys indicate that language and culture definitions take on many meanings. This data also differed dependent upon the different initiatives, ethnicity and target audiences. Parent interviews in particular have provided a complex picture on the value of language culture and identity that varies significantly.

Families' needs regarding responsiveness to language and culture differed significantly across the initiatives. These differences can be described best as a spectrum that reflects their choices of early childhood provision, reveals their ideas and understandings regarding their language and culture, and also echoes their perspectives on the importance and inclusion of language and culture in education. This was best articulated by provider interviews where they understood that some of their families (particularly Engaging Priority Families) were somewhat alienated from their language, culture and identity. Some of these whānau are third generation urban situated and have limited understanding of their extended whānau, hapū and iwi. Provider interviews indicated that when whānau have had negative experiences in their own education with regards to language, culture and identity they have taken the position of maintaining language and culture at home rather than in an educational setting.

Parent interviews from supported playgroups indicated that they often chose a playgroup because language and culture were significant to the playgroup context. This factor is particularly prevalent for some Pasifika families where language, culture, religion and family connectedness were significant influences on enrolment and participation. Within these playgroups members were often encouraged and informed of the playgroup through word of mouth from extended family members within their community groups such as church. For Pasifika families the interview data indicates a clear correlation between language, culture, religion and family within playgroup. Extended family group community connections have also influenced their participation and ideas around the importance of education.

Within playgroup settings parents have also indicated that there is a sense of community that encourages intergenerational relationships. These are significant for both Pasifika and Māori cultural identity (Hemara, 2000; Metge, 1984; Vester, Houlker, & Whaanga, 2006). This sense of community identity has in some settings developed opportunities for members to grow new relationships and maintain unique cultural values associated with cultural capital.

> The old people come, they can catch up with other old people. The parents come and they can make their friends. Also they come for their children but on the other hand they also come for themselves as they can make friends. (SP parent interview)

Parents in Engaging Priority Families initiatives often indicated that language and culture was not a significant factor in selection of early childhood provision. Some families indicated in both surveys and interviews that language and culture was not a priority for their children. Some indicated in their interviews that they believed that language and culture belong in the home and there was a clear division between home and centre when it comes to language, culture and identity.

Provider interviews reflect this spectrum on the value of language and culture. This is often an indicator of parent and family connectedness to iwi and hapū. Some provider interviews indicated that parents might have experienced negative experiences in their own education that has influenced their ideas around the value of language and culture.

> Spectrum of cultural knowledge from tūturu Māori through to very little. It's generally with whānau that are you've got some that are at different ends of the spectrum in terms of cultural knowledge. (EPF provider interview)

In what ways are connections made with home?

Data from interviews with parents and providers have indicated mixed responses with regards to some initiatives' connections with the home environment and cultural capital of families. Indicative of this is that some initiatives are more directed towards supporting the inclusion of language, culture and identity in early childhood and others are less directive.

Supported playgroups in Pasifika communities where the playgroup context reflected the cultural capital of the participants seem to have created a positive momentum for the parents, children and community. For Pasifika families the opportunity to extend their regular community relationships into early childhood education in a setting that provides a familiar cultural fabric has enabled these families to engage comfortably. The familiarity of the cultural capital and fabric at home is evident in the playgroup context and this is reflected by parents' interviews as a significant factor to their engagement.

> They do things together, sing, pray and play. Always pray there. What I am teaching them at home they are bringing into their playgroup. (SP parent interview)

This is also reflected in kaupapa Māori playgroups where a whānau setting where younger and older siblings attending side by side reflected the tuakana-teina reciprocal learning model that reflects their home environment (Hemara, 2000; Metge, 1984). Within this setting provider interviews indicate that the opportunity for siblings to be in the same environment reinforces the collective collaboration valued by Māori.

> … so there's this kind of tuakana–teina relationship happening between the school community and the supported playgroup so that's one way. Another way is that the families themselves that attend the playgroup and their whānau have developed a relationship with the playgroup so they feel kind of feel very supportive and protective of it as well. (SP provider interview)

Of particular relevance here is the Identity, Language, Culture and Community Engagement (ILCCE) initiative where clusters of services that have available child spaces and are not responsive to their community receive support to reflect and engage with their communities. Some of this support is around encouraging centres to reduce costs and offer access through provision of transport. Indeed one ILCCE provider recounted how an ECE centre in her cluster retracted its decision not to charge fees and sent out invoices and reminder notices. Many families left the centre at this point.

ILCCE provider interviews have suggested that there have been improvements in centre understanding with regards to the importance of culture, language and identity. Providers indicate that centres and their staff have made shifts on a cultural competence continuum (Bishop, 2012) that has enabled them collectively to develop a clearer picture of cultural practices and also challenge staff assumptions about particular cultural groups. For example, one provider spoke of a centre in her cluster finding out through parental survey that the Asian families in the centre wanted their children to learn English most of all—this was a surprise to the teachers. According to providers, this opportunity to collectively engage and explore new understandings with the support of ILCCE has accelerated the centres' responsiveness to home cultural capital, therefore the connections with home.

> I see it over time, from where I started the project to now there's been changes in all the centres in their visual presentation, their effort in trying to korero Māori to the kids and taking on board their tikanga aspects in their daily practice. (Provider interview, ILCC)

Home-based initiative providers varied in their responsiveness to language, culture and identity and finding out about family views and cultural capital. The TAP-funded HB service made efforts to match the HB educator with what the family wanted.

> We have one woman come with her children said, "I want somebody who speaks Samoan only because we only speak English at home so they're getting that already but I want somebody who can…" We've got a couple of Māori educators and so they have a few Māori resources, they get help from family around that sort of stuff. The cultural part is very much there and supported as well. Finding good resources is a problem but I leave that up to the experts. (TAP-funded HB coordinator)

The "experts" were the provider's professional support team. Parents from this HB service liked their children having their own culture/s and language/s reinforced and learning about cultures of others. In response to the question, "What do you need and hope for your family from ECE?" these parents focused on language and culture.

> Probably the cultural side of things. Dancing and singing, not only in our own culture but in other people's cultures as well. My kids are Cook Island Māori and Samoan Chinese so there's quite a range in there…. I want them to be familiar with all cultures, not even think about racism, stuff like that, I just want them to be there and enjoy the company that they're with. Be comfortable in their surroundings.
>
> [My educator] is half Māori but she knows a lot about Māori and I'm just glad she's teaching my daughter to understand the language.

Another HB provider had surveyed and held group discussions with parents about what they wanted in terms of their home language and culture.

The third HB provider was developing ideas around cultural competence and how the family home cultural capital could be incorporated into the initiative. Suggestions were to include music and flags of countries, somewhat superficial tokens of what more might be done.

How do providers show an interest in family culture and home experiences? Anything more they might do?

Most provider interviews and surveys indicate a strong interest in the family culture and home experiences. Provider interviews reveal an appreciation for the diverse families they encounter and the challenges each family face. Overall, there is a respectful appreciation for each family, their make-up, language, culture and identity. This was also reciprocated in EPF parent interviews where parents indicated a genuine appreciation for their key worker and their relationship.

Providers have developed strong relationships within their communities that have been developed over time. Providers clearly value the diversity of their communities and reciprocate this through their increasing visibility and availability to community participants.

Each provider has developed its own set of unique methods of engaging with their local community and families and reflecting this in their methods of operating. Some providers have developed iwi specific mechanisms that clearly reflect the cultural capital and funds of knowledge exclusive to their families. Other providers have developed more generic cultural tools that again reflect the diverse iwi groups that operate in their community.

These innovative methods of capturing and reflecting cultural uniqueness and significance have enabled providers to develop strong partnerships with their families and local community.

How well do the initiatives and overall programme respond to family language and culture?

Overall some initiatives by design respond very well to family language and culture. Those that lend themselves to supporting the inclusion of language, culture and identity have increased capacity for culturally competent and responsive early childhood education, according to providers. In particular, in supported playgroups and ILCCE services, relationships with families and community facilitate power sharing and enable funds of knowledge to be shared between home and service.

Other initiatives have different foci areas and as such language, culture and identity depends on the priority accorded it by providers.

One overall implication for Engaging Priority Families is that the ECE service needs to be a place where families feel they have a place and where they belong. This idea was encapsulated by an EPF provider who said:

> I think for my project it's the comfort factor—you know they have to be comfortable when they go into the centre. And … the biggest thing that makes them comfortable is the teaching staff. … and the management, you know the meet and greet, the initial contact. First impressions, … I think that does make a huge difference. You know in some centres with the families who go into they're just so busy that they don't even say 'Hello' or 'Welcome' or you know they will just say 'Can I help you?'…. And they're kind of rushed through like an induction of the centre rather than getting at their level, and you know welcomed, and made to feel included.

Within the ECE service, the aspirations of parents for their children need to be listened to and connections made with funds of knowledge from home.

Discussion

Spectrum of language culture and identity

The spectrum of value towards identity, language and culture indicates the diversity among parents and families across all the initiatives. This also signifies the distinct needs and priorities of families with regards to early childhood provision and is reflected by the range of initiatives provided.

The most successful initiatives and examples in regards to identity, language and culture suggest that when there is a correlation between the home culture and centre culture, families positively echoed a sense of belonging and ownership. These sentiments also reflect the commitment shown by participants in these services. Family interviews indicate that for some there is a sense of familiarity, feeling comfortable and the impression that they can contribute to the service if required. This sense of engagement has empowered parents to feel as though they are significant to the service itself and that the cultural fabric of home has a place in early childhood. Embedded within this fabric is "the critical role of socially and culturally mediated learning and of the reciprocal and responsive relationships for children with people, places and things" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 9) that makes up a culturally responsive service. Initiatives that engage with and reciprocate these concepts have successfully illuminated language, culture and identity as essential to early childhood pedagogy and the families' cultural capital and funds of knowledge are valued.

Some services have recognised and valued the importance of intergenerational relationships as method of knowledge transmission. For Māori, taonga tuku iho is defined as intergenerational knowledge and understandings passed down from generation to generation (Bishop, 2012). This can also be defined as treasures from our ancestors that are a "central Māori epistemological construct" (Bishop, 1999, p. 171). Ritchie and Rau (2002) also define this as legitimating Māori ways of knowing, being and doing within our education settings. Services where this has been supported have recognised the importance of enabling and valuing transmission of cultural capital.

Māori originate from different iwi that each carry specific knowledge and tools genuine in totality and legitimate to their province, and therefore Māori identities can often be complex. Our analysis suggests that providers who have developed unique methods of engaging with their communities' rich fabric of symbols, rituals and values can enable iwi-specific dialect, kawa and tikanga to be appreciated as a vehicle for building iwi collective capacity. Likewise other providers who due to the nature of their community have resorted to providing a generic value base have engaged with their community respectfully by acknowledging their diversity.

For families and initiatives where language, culture and identity are less valued, families encounter different priorities and challenges. Associated with these are their own educational experiences, their own association and understanding of their cultural background and their positions that home and centre are two distinctively separate environments that very rarely cross. Further investigation into these perspectives and experiences would be recommended.

Value and reciprocation from ECE sector—responsibility

Data from interviews have indicated that providers value and strongly advocate for language, culture and identity to be foregrounded as important to enabling participation in early childhood. This is especially evident in their practices and engagement with family and communities where they operate. The approach is consistent with Te Whāriki, which describes a sociocultural view of learning, construing it as a social practice embedded within family, community and educational setting contexts. An implication is that teaching and learning needs to take account of these contexts. The Participation Programme initiatives are innovative methods of encouraging participation and particular initiatives and providers have aimed to increase sector responsiveness to home and community contexts. The study has shown that understanding these contexts is complex and that parents' perspectives (as discussed previously) differ according to aspirations and experiences.

One area that may require greater support is to enable early childhood sector responsibility and accountability for providing culturally responsive education. Continuing research and professional development for teachers/educators aimed at strengthening analysis, extending understanding and working in partnership with the many players in education is a model that has worked well in New Zealand ECE settings and been the subject of recent research reports (e.g., Mitchell, Meagher-Lundberg, Mara, Cubey, & Whitford, 2011; Centre of Innovation publications).

At the end of 2012, the Minstry had begun development of Stengthening Early Learning Opportunities (SELO), a new programme for ongoing professional development, with a more targeted focus on supporting services to be culturally intelligent.

3. Community responsiveness

The Participation Programme was designed to draw on and value community knowledge of ECE gaps and needs. In this chapter, interview data from providers and MOE staff are used to examine

- the inclusion of community perspectives during set-up and decisions about provision;
- the selection of providers that connect with the community; and
- how participation initiative providers implement their initiative/s in a community responsive way.

In an overall conclusion, we discuss the value of community and family responsiveness in increasing participation and in success of the initiatives.

Inclusion of community perspectives during set-up and decisions about provision

MOE staff were asked how they determined which initiatives were suitable for which communities. Clearly there were constraints since the allocation of initiatives is based on a needs assessment and Northern region had more non-participating families than other regions.

Within constraints, MOE identified need in designated Census Area Units (CAUs) and looked for initiative/s to address the needs. Staff have in-depth knowledge of communities including knowledge of the physical geography of each community, the nature and usage of current provision, demographic information about the community, including cultural and ethnic characteristics of families with children under five years, and community and government agencies. Their knowledge comes from "what we have directly from the community, being on the ground every day".

Much decision-making was based on the following key considerations:

- Supply and demand—whether there are sufficient existing ECE services.
- Waiting lists in existing ECE services.
- Whether existing provision is being used to capacity.
- Location of services and accessibility.
- Availability of public transport and transport routes.
- The cultural and ethnic characteristics of families in the community.
- Contextual matters, including government policy, local body policies and local context.

MOE staff then looked at what was the best initiative fit for that community. For example, where capacity was not being used because it was not meeting needs, ILCC could be the answer. Culturally specific services were often said to be sought by Tongan, Samoan, Niuean, and Cook Islands families, rather than a Pasifika service generally.

Contextual matters were relevant. The Southern region, because of the Christchurch earthquake, changed the scope of the regions from Aranui to a wider coverage because many families had been displaced. EPF was a valuable initiative in this situation, enabling connection with ECE services.

MOE staff chose the kinds of service needed to match with the circumstances of families.

> Of course the types of services we were looking at have to fit with the community—working parents, high benefit dependency. There is not one solution fits all. You need to go in and identify what the needs are … we do need to know what is going on at a grassroots level. We can use all

> the demographic data we want in those areas, based on numbers but actually drilling down and deciding what they actually want is more important.
>
> In the first year, especially TAP 1 and 2 and EPF, we were focusing on areas where there were non-participants. This was married with local need.

ICPP and TAP 3 are the two initiatives that lend themselves to finding innovative solutions and that were directly responsive to communities. ICPP projects are led by Community Action Groups (CAGs), which are made up of community representatives working with the MOE. CAGs have a modest allocation of funding over a three-year period (in the region of $80,000 to $170,000 a year, depending on the CAG's action plan) and are able to design their own initiatives to suit their communities. Roles ICPP have played include

- providing information for families through publication of a service directory;
- supporting ECE services to build local networks and share strategies;
- holding events for families and children to get a taste of ECE and find out more; and
- developing some new provision, e.g., playgroups.

The role a CAG plays in coordinating ECE services and community agencies seems to be pivotal in enabling collaboration to occur. The MOE contracted evaluation of the strategic plan for ECE (Mitchell et al., 2011) found that without structures in place to support coordination, little networking among ECE services was occurring. CAGs seem potentially able to provide such support.

A scoping report examines what is happening in a community, identifies barriers to ECE participation and what the community wants in terms of ECE. Appendix 1 provides case studies of ICPPs that illustrate ways in which these have developed.

TAP 3 grants can be used for new solutions to encourage ECE participation. =

One question is whether it would be desirable to allow greater autonomy for MOE staff and community decision-making over the nature of solutions to participation barriers, rather than selecting from a pool of initiatives. Several different ideas for what would work well in particular communities were proposed in participant interviews, such as mobile ECE services and coordinators. Some MOE staff and providers expressed a strong view that having a community planning process in each community with ability to "dream up something new" would be ideal.

Selection of providers who 'connect' with the community

The general attributes in providers that MOE staff said they were looking for included

- the ability to work with Māori or Pasifika families, "cultural intelligence";
- previous experience and networks, people who know the community well, wraparound services to support families;
- capability and capacity;
- community responsiveness; and
- responsive providers able to engage non-participating families.

Providers need to be connected to the community and hold strong community networks. One MOE focus group interview described selection of a Pasifika organisation that combined these attributes well:

> … the strength was in their connections into those communities. It was very much there, they knew the community, and knew the people. We actually knew they had kids sitting there already.

> The organisation itself is trusted by the Pacific community in [locality]. It's all very well to say that this contract targets Pasifika. Well, in Auckland they could have a whole CAU that's just Tongan families. Well, in Christchurch we needed someone that could do multiple ethnicities, Pacific identities.

Some attributes were described as being specific to different initiatives, with connectedness to the community underpinning these. Table 8 summarises MOE and provider views of what specific qualities are needed for each initiative.

Table 8: Views of provider attributes needed for success with specific initiatives

Initiative	Attributes needed	Typical comment
ILCCE	Ability to draw on local iwi knowledge, encourage connections with the community.	One way that ILCCE worked quite well was "to suggest connections with local organisations and that is what yielded the big jump in participation, so they weren't targeting individual families but organisations that were working with families in the area, so they were getting links to large group of families with possible children in the 3 to 5 age category". (ILCCE provider)
TAP	Organisational capability for service delivery (including governance and financial acumen), responsiveness to community in terms of identity language and culture, and financial viability.	Viability and sustainability are important. (MOE) [How did you know it would work for your community?] Probably based on my work. I have worked for AUT in a family literacy programme in Manurewa and have worked with lots of Pacific Islands and Māori families. I did my Masters study around that as well and I just know that if you have relationships and trust and respect with the people you are dealing with then the rest will happen. (TAP 1 provider)
SP	Management and organisational capability, community knowledge and experience, responsiveness to Māori and Pasifika families, knowledge and connections with services and agencies to support families.	Experience or a community engagement knowledge background. They need to have previous experience within their communities. ECE is desirable but not the only thing. Working with Māori and PI in low socioeconomic areas and being able to connect with them on the ground. They also need to have knowledge of surrounding services—the other ECE services and the connections and links to other government services and agencies, e.g., Council, MPIA etc. As well they do need good management and organisational processes in place. (MOE)
EPF	Credibility and engagement with the local community, knowledge and connections with services and agencies to support families.	One of the things about the programme is we asked providers to choose the most vulnerable families that they could so they're generally complex family situations that they're having to resolve and then asking families to think about education in that. It is quite complicated I think. (MOE) There was quite a strong intent with EPF to actually support the family to overcome some of those barriers or manage some of those barriers in the first instance so they could actually start to think about education as a priority. Hence getting the people not necessarily from the educational background but getting people from the community who know the community and the various links and agencies and have a network. (MOE) We want the providers to access educational experts and be the broker between the educationalist, and that that provider be someone who is very relatable to the family. (MOE)
FRHB	Expertise in home-based ECE, knowledge of community.	We had access to the community link and we were there but did not have a building—we all work from here [another suburb] so it's about a presence in those communities that we have to get better at. (FRHB provider reflecting on a project that was not successful) We had to get alongside key people in the community and that has been a long process and it has only just been recently that [Name] feels that she has got a key person in one of the communities. (FRHB provider)
ICPP	Know the community well, work quickly	They need to "hit the ground running". (MOE)

MOE staff commented on the need to have providers who are both a good fit for the community but also have the capacity to deliver what is required. Comment was made that the current system can disadvantage or deter providers who are a good fit but are unused to working with the application processes required by government as exemplified below:

- Providers "looking good on paper" but not good at service delivery.
- Providers who have strong community bases but are not good at writing applications.
- Knowing where to find GETs and being able to put the application together.
- Finding people in the community who can help with management and governance while providers "own the vision".
- "We spend a lot of time on the phone supporting them, making them aware of how the system works and how the Ministry system works—how to apply and get a login."

MOE staff said that support mechanisms, such as mentoring by organisations proficient in project management processes, might be one means of enabling providers who are new to the systems to develop an understanding of Ministry application processes.

implementation in a community responsive way

Providers were asked the question, "When you put in a proposal to deliver this initiative, how did you determine it could work for your community?" The two main responses from providers who were interviewed were that the provider knew the community through previous work in it and/or the provider had experience in delivering the same or similar initiatives. Hence, these providers knew how to go about delivering the initiative.

Knowing the community through prior experience

Many providers were already working in the community through a similar or relevant programme. An advantage was that they could use knowledge gained to develop their programme.

> Because we did have the PPP ECE project we actually learnt from that—we knew what the needs of the community were. We hadn't worked in the area before but we had other services in our organisation that could actually feed into that at that time [parenting service] so we were aware. (EPF provider interview)

Familiarity with the ECE services, government and community agencies enabled the provider to understand family needs well from an 'insider' perspective and use established networks within the programme.

> I think in a large part you just become familiar with the issues of the community once you are in there. It's probably not something you can get from the outside but once you are working with the families they are happy to let you know what is going on. (EPF provider interview)

> We already had a good relationship with the MOE because of [the Promoting Participation Programme that preceded the current Participation Programme]. This also translated to the relationships with community because they were already established. These include centres, social service agencies and MOE.… We drew on our knowledge base of community needs [that we had] already. (EPF, SP, ILCCE provider interview)

Community knowledge helped providers gauge whether a particular initiative would suit and what would be needed to support it.

> We had just come out of the Ministry [contract for] supporting playgroups to become licensed services and to apply for funding … plus another contract providing professional learning development for teachers in EC services. So we felt we could provide a type of a service and supported playgroups with a paid coordinator sounded much more effective in being able to support our community. In saying that, though, playgroups themselves which are parent-led are usually established through a group, an established group, a sports group, a group of friends, a church group so they already have that comradeship, whereas a supported playgroup, we are going into areas where families haven't participated or where there is very low participation and trying to meld together a group of people from all walks of lives and that has been quite difficult to establish. But we felt that we could find people from within the community that would broker that kind of relationship. So we had people within our different networks that we could contact and it was about that, let's put in a tender for the contract but at the same time let's put feelers out there to see who is available in the community from those groups. We may not have known them ourselves but the networks we work within they certainly have contacts. (SP and EPF provider interview)

All the providers, except two home-based providers, and one SP provider, knew the community well. Knowing the community or having coordinators from the community seems to matter, as this account from a highly successful SP provider indicates. In this account she compares different levels of community involvement and the success in recruiting families.

> Unfortunately we were not able to get the community people from within [Tui] community. We were able to get a community person from [Korimako] that we established and that is based at a church. We were also able to get a community person from [Piwakawaka] and that is also based at a Samoa community hall and that has established really well. Others we have had keen people that we know have worked with Pacific families, but we have taken them out of another area to go into [Tui] and we have found we have continued to struggle to establish a really strong group of people. Another group we have established in [Tui] is a Chinese community and they have high attendance—not a problem for them as 96% of their focus is on education we have been told, that's a high priority for them, our bilingual Chinese group. They operate very well and have high attendance rates. They do have a core of families from [Tui] area but then they also have families from all over Auckland, because they are the only bilingual Chinese in Auckland. They have a strong network through their newspaper and Internet services.

She shows how competition when another centre is set up may change the pattern of participation. And that hours matter for families.

> The other three groups we have, one is based in a school at [Name] primary, and initially it worked well until [Name] established its own ECE service on site as well—a lot of our children that were older transferred over to the [Name] ECE at the school and we have had to work hard at re-establishing families to come in. The families we have found that are more willing to participate are either the under 2s or the 2- to 3-year-olds because the 3- to 4-year-olds they put into the service.… Then we have another one based up in [Hihi] community centre. But we have found that community really hard to reach. We have families we have visited regularly, because their children all play outside. But they are just quite happy for their children to continue playing outside. To be

> quite honest, a lot of them are quite young families where they are going to bed really late and they don't get up until about 11 in the morning. So for them to front up, some of them have come at 11 am—for that hour, but on the whole their day doesn't start until about 11 to 12.

This coordinator showed how a church-based service was able to use church budgetary services to support families and the church coordinator's help to attract participation.

> We had a playgroup established at St Lukes church on the corner of [Name] Rd but we weren't able to draw on any of their community because their parishioners are 65+. Great partnership and also a budgetary service that operates out of there and the coordinator there is great in introducing any of the families that come in for support from the foodbank. [At the end of the interview, she also mentioned a playgroup that runs on Saturdays in conjunction with church in order to bring families in.]

One of the HB providers who did not know the community found it hard to "get a foot in the door" and eventually agreed to end the contract.

> I was born in [community] and thought it would be like giving back to the community but in actual fact the community is closed, it is not an open community at all. It is very protective of who is in there.… The key—the thing I have learnt the most out of this type of initiative and the whole engaging priority family thing is it is about relationships. (Exit interview with a home-based provider)

Understanding and experience in delivering the initiative

The second feature that enabled providers to know what would work in the community was the provider's understanding of delivering the initiative. Often this combined with local knowledge of families and the community.

An iwi-based Māori organisation knew the needs of Māori families already through its own iwi and had the knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori to deliver the ILCCE initiative.

> We looked at it from an iwi organisation, iwi framework. We saw that there were centres crying out for help. They wanted te reo and tikanga in their centres but did not have the resources [human resources]. There may have been Māori in the centres but just because they are Māori it doesn't mean they know Māori. Who better to deliver it than iwi? (ILCCE provider interview)

A kindergarten association provider with a home-based initiative regarded the association as offering a base of ECE understanding and a team of people, including people from the local community, with collective knowledge to provide home-based initiatives.

> We looked at ourselves as a home-based service but more than that we looked at ourselves as being part of a larger organisation which is the kindergarten association and I'm really clear about the knowledge that I've got and I'm really also clear about areas that are not my strength, areas where I need additional support and I know that within the wider team that we have people that have the knowledge and skills and what have you. That is part of the reason that I'm not over there as a coordinator and we have employed somebody from that local community. (HB provider interview)

Another of the home-based providers had long experience in coordinating home-based provision. When we interviewed this provider in Stage 1, there was no physical base in the community. Since then the provider had established a drop-in centre with a shopfront window in the main shopping centre. This was said to be useful in supporting families and recruiting new families.

The insights of an ILCCE provider who explained how they generated community responsiveness within the centres they worked with suggest a valuable strategy is to survey community and address issues that are found.

> We started with the community survey and a lot of churches that were within that community didn't even know of the services, or use the services. One of the services used the church premises but the parish children did not come there and so there were a lot of mismatches like that. So our first round of community survey quite clearly revealed that these centres were seen to be quite distant from the community and so then we sat with the teachers in cluster meetings and individually to brainstorm in their services what would work. Centres tried coffee mornings for families to just drop in and feel welcome and see what was there.
>
> The other thing of course during those meetings there were lots of issues around whether they [families] could afford the service—we can approach the families but what if they can't afford it, we can approach the families, but what if the times don't work? We can approach them but what if they don't have transport to get to us? So those sorts of issues started popping up. There were commonalities across services. Then we strategized and looked at options these centres could offer. They have trialled with that—they have trialled different fee structures, waiving of fees, sessional hours, providing transportation to the service and back home.

Nature of community involvement

In this section, the nature of community involvement is analysed by individual initiative and then across all initiatives.

More than one initiative

Providers with more than one initiative had extensive connections with community organisations, government agencies (especially WINZ and CYFS), social services and health services, which were used to support families and make referrals to the initiative.

One provider that delivers EPF in three of the priority areas said:

> We do engage with other community services such as CYFS, WINZ, Salvation Army, there's a number of organisations we can refer them to if we can't help or we can collaboratively work with other organisations to meet the needs of the family.

Working well, this network was described as being

> … like a professional working relationship within the area. In the Tamaki ward there is the TLC initiative—Tamaki Learning Champions—which is [names two team members who work in the ward]—who play a more active role in the ward by attending play days.

The community organisations which support this team in participation in ECE were identified as Plunket, and in one area, the dental nurse who works with the same age group.

> I think the community organisations who offer the most support are also those targeting the same kids because they all have a united agenda.

These participants emphasised the importance of the organisations being local.

> What I've learnt in the past is the family love it when I bring it back to home—as they call it—so I tend to only work with services within, e.g., the Tamaki area—families I work with much prefer it because it's walking distance and they're familiar with certain faces and all these events they've attended, plus schools.

Using local services was not always possible, however, in areas that were geographically dispersed. In these situations, the provider said, "We try and link with the services that are most convenient for our families at all times."

EPF

EPF providers seemed more likely than others to have referral agencies as well as connections with ECE and community services.

> Well, let's take [place]. We rely on a referral process so we need to be engaged with agencies that come into contact with whānau who might be able to hook us up. And so that can be community groups, it can be immigrant groups, it can be health sector groups. All sorts of agencies. And so we interact with the community through those agencies and then they refer families to us … we hold events or we participate in events that are happening where there are community events. So it could be a…. promotion day where a whole lot of agencies get together and have like an expo … we go along to things like kaumatua hui. This morning we presented at a kōhanga reo hui to discuss the EPF initiative. (EPF provider)

This provider said some organisations really want to engage with ECE. Some of the community do not engage with ECE because it is quite foreign to them, and with these, they work on building relationships and talk about the benefits of ECE. They have had "heaps of support" from the community, mainly because they encourage ECE participation where otherwise it would not happen.

Supported Playgroups

Supported playgroups that were located on a church site, school or marae held connections that seemed to strengthen them.

> Some of the SP have evolved very successfully and some continue to be challenged. We have found that the groups that have been sited on church and school sites have been more effective in coming together, having a community person to lead that—having a community base they can draw on. So Tamaki has worked really well for us in that way, the people are from within the community and they are mainly based at a church or at a school. Of course the other one is at a marae—all of those ones have been really, really successful. A number of others continue to fluctuate, because families move, families have children that go to school. This is something the coordinators have found themselves, they need to not just promote, recruit and that's the end of it. You have to continue to promote and recruit and bring on new people. We still find too as the children get a little bit older, families feel they may need to put them into an early childhood service as such or to kindergarten so then they withdraw completely. Although some of them have the opportunity to attend playgroup a couple of days, attend kindergarten a couple of days and maybe drop off a child at an early childhood service, so all of those are variables that we have which is great as they have so many opportunities. (Pasifika SP provider interview)

Likewise, another SP provider spoke of the involvement with community through connections with the school in which they were located.

> So community in this sense is the school because we are based at [name] school. So we have involvement with the community through the school … because they see us as a part of the school or associated with it being based there…. So the school itself kind of buddies us, so we've got the Board of Trustees at the school who … look after us, we've got the principal and we've got the school students and families who get involved with us. For example, we just had our … one year birthday celebrations and so the students' kapa haka came in and performed for the [name] kids and … yeah put on a show for them and … we gave them kai and so there's this kind of tuakana–teina relationship happening between the school community and the supported playgroup so that's one way. Another way is that the families themselves that attend the playgroup and their whānau have developed a relationship with the playgroup so they feel kind of feel very supportive and protective of it as well.… (SP provider interview)

ILCCE

ILCCE initiatives focus on supporting ECE participation by trying to encourage a culturally rich community where people feel welcome. One important attribute is the "right person" to work with centres—people from the community or iwi.

> The centres for ILCCE I have picked up are the centres I have already been working with. I already have relationships, which helped me to bring in ILCCE staff. It had to be the right person to work with the community. They have to have the right āhua and to ensure it is delivered in a non-threatening way. You have to have the right person. (ILCCE coordinator interview)

Another way in which ILCCE providers are involved with community is through connections with external groups, such as one provider who said a church group and foster agency were supporting participation in the cluster centres through referrals.

Home-based

Home-based used community networks to provide information for families and to recruit families. For example, one provider was part of a network where all agencies in the area come together to share what they do. This enables the coordinator to bring back information to families and to be in a position to, for example, make public health nurse referrals and vice versa.

Some insights can be gained from a contractor who agreed to end their HB contract with MOE because they were not recruiting enough families. The account highlights the critical importance of good community relationships.

> We appointed two community-support workers that worked in the community. We accessed the community link … as a base and the staff worked out of the community link … one day a week. They then worked out of McDonalds, they made connections with the community. They put a lot of groundwork in. They door knocked, we tried different ways of approaching families. We had a BBQ in the shopping mall, which we were excited about because we got 25 names of families whose children don't participate in ECE, so we thought we were on to a winner. When the staff went back to connect with the families, they had either moved on, or were not interested or in some cases had just put a false name down because they were in a draw so a false name gave them an opportunity to win something [an immediate draw on the spot]. We went to visit them and there

> was no such person. What appeared to be happening was that we had leads but we could not turn leads into an actual number.

The MOE gave names of EPF providers to the home-based provider to support recruitment.

> [One provider] promised families but in fact what he did give us was an actual database and the staff started going through the database but we couldn't turn any of the families on that database into actual ECE participants. [These were] just names of families that lived in the area who did not participate [that he had not recruited].

> Then there was [another provider] who was fabulous and supported us and what we found was that there were some relationship issues with our staff and staff on the ground in her team and in [another initiative]—it was personal—if a staff member in one of the agencies who was a referrer did not like you they would not refer. We found out later in the piece that we had a relationship issue.

TAP

The TAP 1 provider whom we interviewed had not yet opened the centre but had made connections with neighbours and invited them to "come into the centre if they see us there." This provider is actively meeting with community groups, such as church groups, and EPF providers. The plans are for an integrated centre that includes whānau rooms for people beyond the parents in the centre to use.

> We really identified [that] a lot of Pasifika families prefer, you know, parents to look after their children. We thought if we can have some things happening in there and we can just invite them in—they don't have to enrol their children but we thought we could have weaving or cooking or English classes. Then we also have a room where we can have people from the community like WINZ or lawyers or budgeting or Plunket. The public health nurse, I have met the public health nurse in that area. They're really excited to have someone they can work with like that. I said there is room there if they want to come in. (TAP provider interview)

Summary

The MOE valued and drew on community knowledge in designing and putting initiatives in place, selecting providers and implementing provision. MOE staff drew on their considerable community knowledge to choose initiatives suitable for particular communities and that matched the needs of families. Two initiatives, ICPP and TAP 3, most lend themselves to finding innovative solutions and being directly responsive to communities since the nature and shape is not predetermined. Some MOE staff and providers expressed a strong view that having an ICPP and community-planning process in every community would be ideal.

Providers were selected by the MOE on the basis they were a 'good fit' with the community and had capacity to deliver the initiative. Two characteristics of providers helped them to be more responsive to the community. One was having related or relevant experience working in the community. This enabled providers to understand family needs, draw on already established family support networks, and hold a good idea of what might work in a particular community and what support systems might need to be put in place. Secondly, having understanding and experience in delivering an initiative was beneficial.

Characteristics of providers and of particular initiatives seemed to help build community networks and responsiveness. Where a provider was involved in more than one initiative, knowledge and resources from one were able to be used in the others. EPF had most contact with external agencies and played a brokering role in supporting families. Supported playgroups that were located in a school, church or marae were able to build close links with their wider co-located community. Other providers reinforced the importance of community connection.

4. National picture of ECE participation and participation initiative enrolments

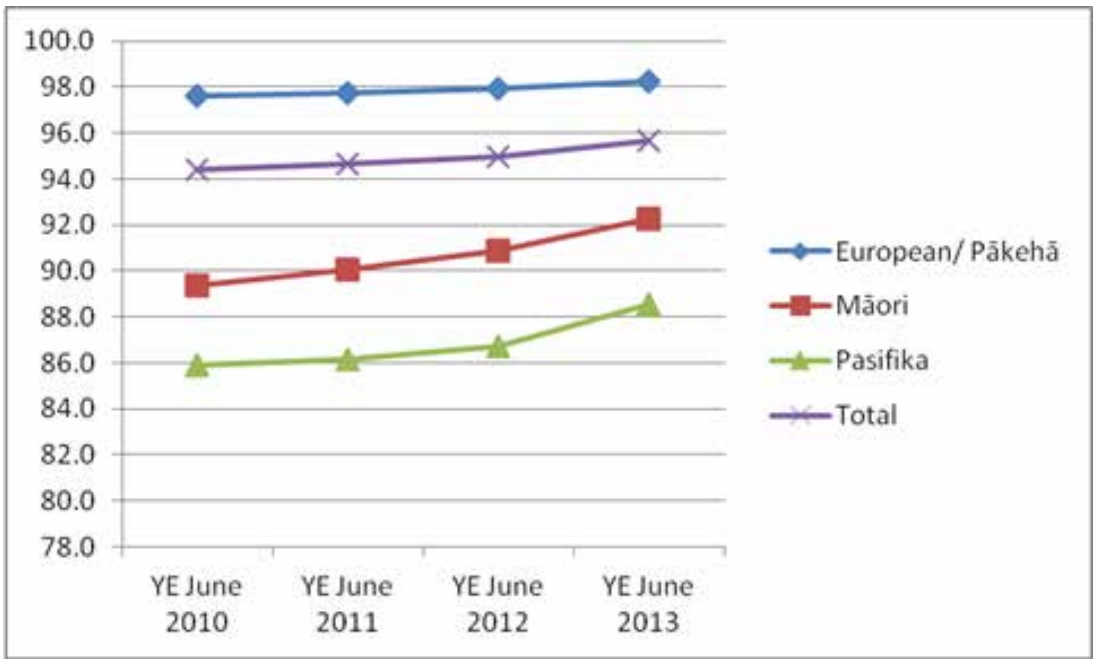
MOE data on ECE enrolments and participation prior to school entry is used in this chapter to show national shifts over the period of the Participation Programme. This data would be expected to incorporate any family whose child had come into ECE because of the Participation Programme, and children in services using the initiatives. We then go on to analyse enrolments in Participation Initiatives over the time of the Programme. The chapter ends with a short summary.

Participation—national picture

The government goal announced in March 2012 is that in 2016, 98% of all children starting school will have participated in quality ECE. The Pasifika Education Plan for the period 2013 to 2017 set consistent targets for Pasifika children to increase their ECE participation to 98% by 2016, replacing the earlier aim for "more Pasifika children" to participate in ECE. Similarly, the Ka Hikitia—Managing for Success (Ministry of Education, 2006) target of 95% of Māori children participating in ECE before school by 2012 was replaced with the 98% target for 2016. These children are in groups with low rates of ECE participation and include those described by the MOE as "hardest to reach". Baseline data for the 98% goal was gathered at the end of June 2012.

For the year to end of June 2013 participation in ECE before starting primary school was 95.6% nationally. This represented a steady increase from 94.4 % in June 2010, 94.6 % in June 2011, 95% in June 2012, and 95.6% in June 2013, a total percentage point increase of 1.2%. Māori and Pasifika participation rates had increased over the same period by 2.3 percentage points and 2.2 percentage points respectively, showing a greater increase than for non-priority groups, which may indicate that the Participation Programme is contributing to this positive trend. The Participation Programme was funded to achieve an additional 3,500 enrolments by priority children, and had achieved just over 6,300 enrolments at the end of June 2013. However, these increases, while showing progress, are not yet on track to meet the goals of Ka Hikitia and the Pasifika Education Plan.

Figure 5: Prior participation in early childhood education of children starting school by ethnic group and year, 2010–2013



MOE data on prior participation in ECE of children starting school shows that prior participation is higher for children attending higher decile schools and lower for children attending low decile schools. From the year ended June 2010 to June 2013, prior ECE participation has shown a gradual increase for children in each type of school by decile, and more so for children in low decile schools. The greatest increase was for children attending Decile 1 schools where prior participation increased by 5.3 percentage points from 80.9% in 2010 to 86.2% in 2013.

ECE enrolments through initiatives

Over the first two years of the initiatives (2010 to 2012), enrolments in all initiatives increased considerably. The biggest gain in current ECE enrolments has been made by the EPF initiative with an increase from 390 (as at 31 December 2011) to 814 (as at 31 December 2012). Over the same two years, the number of children ever enrolled by EPF jumped from 410 to 1121. Supported playgroups also had a substantial increase in ECE participation with an increase from 444 to 663 (888 ever enrolled by the end of 2011 and 1571 by the end of 2012). TAP started with zero enrolments in 2011 to 294 current enrolments by the end of 2012 (with 453 enrolments over the year).

Table 9: Overall enrolments in ECE from six ECE participation initiatives from 2011 to 2012

Initiative	Targets for participation programme (first year)*	Enrolments at December 2011**	Enrolments at December 2012
EPF	875	390	814
SP	415	444	663
ILCCE	40	88	354
ICPP	700	7**	106
HB1	160	4**	46
TAP		0***	294
Total children*****	2190	845	2,246

***Note**: Includes children currently enrolled; excludes those who have transitioned to school or another ECE, children who have exited the programme, and children registered in EPF but not yet enrolled in an ECE service.*
** Initiative targets were set for the first year of the Participation Programme. From year 2, individual initiative targets were replaced by the Government's BPS Goal 2 (that in 2016, 98% of children starting school will have participated in quality ECE).*
*** These totals differ from those in the baseline report, as the MOE has revised its data collection processes, and is getting more accurate data from providers (including corrections to historical data).*
**** These numbers are very low because these two initiatives, ICPP and HB, had just started in 2011.*
***** No TAP projects were operating at December 2011.*
****** Children are counted in each initiative through which they participated in ECE. Therefore, the number of chidren in the 'Total' column will generally be less than the sum of the students in each initiative.*

ICPP, HB and TAP showed the biggest percentage increase in enrolments, but they had few or no enrolments in 2011. The TAP building projects begun in the first and second years were still to be completed. ILCCE providers work with services that have spare capacity to support them to be more responsive to their communities. It is not possible to link increased enrolments in these services to enrolment of priority families who have not previously attended ECE, since ILCCE providers do not work directly with families.

In addition to those children currently enrolled in ECE through the initiatives, there are also those who were enrolled but have now exited. There are a number of reasons for exiting but the MOE data collection focuses on those most likely to be accurately reported by parents to providers. Additional reasons could be dissatisfaction with the service, relocation of the family, cost or transport issues. Table 10 shows the number of children ever enrolled in ECE by initiative, the total of these children that have exited and the known reasons for this. Just over a fifth of EPF families have left the initiative for unknown reasons, which matches with higher levels of transience and the level of support needed for these families to engage with ECE. They also have one of the highes exiting to school rates of the initiatives, a reflection of the older ages of the children within the initiative and the fact that EPF providers keep working with families until three months past school enrolment. Just over a third of the supported playgroup families exited for unknown reasons, but across the initiatives they showed higher levels of exiting to school or another ECE service, which could be an indication that supported playgroups are bridging a gap to more formalised ECE. The TAP initiatives have a lower exit to school rate and a higher proportion of leaving for unknown reasons.

Table 10: Total ever enrolled to 31st December 2012 and exit figures

Initiative	Ever enrolled through initiative to 31 Dec 2012**	Total exited n (%)	Exited to School n (%*)	Exited to other ECE n (%*)	Exited to unknown n (%*)
EPF	1121	307 (27.4)	77 (6.9)	0 (0)	230 (20.5)
SP	1571	914 (58.1)	113 (7.2)	260 (16.5)	541 (34.4)
TAP	453	159 (35.1)	10 (2.2)	42 (9.3)	107 (23.6)
ICPP	166	61 (36.8)	1 (0.6)	32 (19.3)	28 (16.9)
FRHB1	70	24 (34.2)	1(1.4)	4 (5.7)	19 (27.1)
ILCCE	510	157 (30.8)	35 (6.9)	47 (9.2)	75 (14.7)
Total children**	**3822**	**1801**	**261**	**380**	**1160**

* *Percentage of total children ever enrolled. This does not include children who exited EPF before enrolling in ECE.*
** *Children are counted in each initiative through which they participated in ECE. Therefore, the number of chidren in the ''Total' column will generally be less than the sum of the students in each initiative.*

These first and second year figures reflect what happened with the implementation of the initiatives. EPF and SP initiatives had a model that was easiest to set up using existing community networks and iwi-based providers. This was an extension of the work already being done by many of these providers so carried some momentum from the outset. TAP-funded projects had a much slower start with entire centres being built in some cases. Delays in gaining building and resources consents and the time taken to complete projects meant that ECE enrolment figures for the first year of the initiatives were non-existent but grew dramatically in the second year as projects were finished and children were able to be enrolled. However, some TAP projects started in the first year were still not completed in the second year.

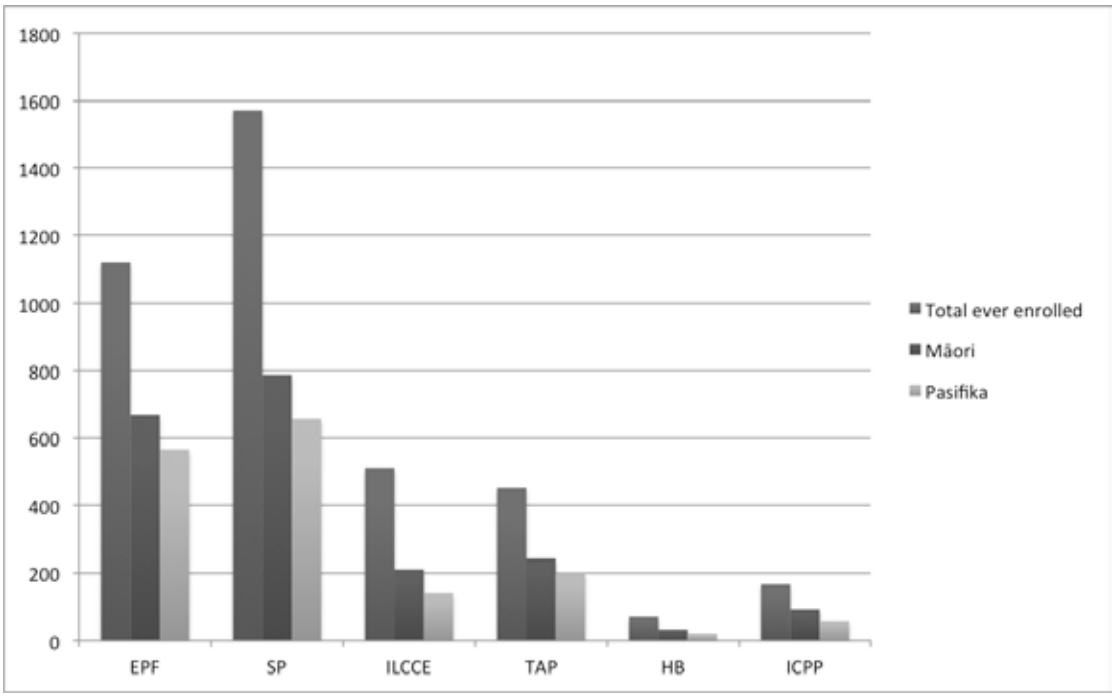
Overall the numbers of Māori and Pasifika children enrolled in the initiatives were higher than enrolments for other groups.

Table 11: Overall enrolments in ECE participation initiatives by ethnicity at December 2012. Includes all currently enrolled and currently registered children.

	Māori	Pasifika	Asian	European/ Pākehā	Other	Total Responses*
EPF	610	505	122	19	15	1021
SP	329	296	173	60	11	663
ILCCE	146	107	120	48	9	354
TAP	159	130	29	31	6	294
HB1	18	12	12	3	5	46
ICPP	41	39	46	5	1	106
HB2	15	9	4	0	0	28
Total children**	**1294**	**1088**	**504**	**164**	**47**	**2478**

* *Students who identify with more than one ethnic group are counted in each group they identified with. Therefore, the number of students in the 'Total Responses' column will generally be less than the sum of the students in each group.*
** *Children are counted in each initiative through which they participated in ECE. Therefore, the number of chidren in the 'Total' column will generally be less than the sum of the students in each initiative.*

Figure 5: Overall enrolments in ECE participation initiatives by ethnicity at December 2012



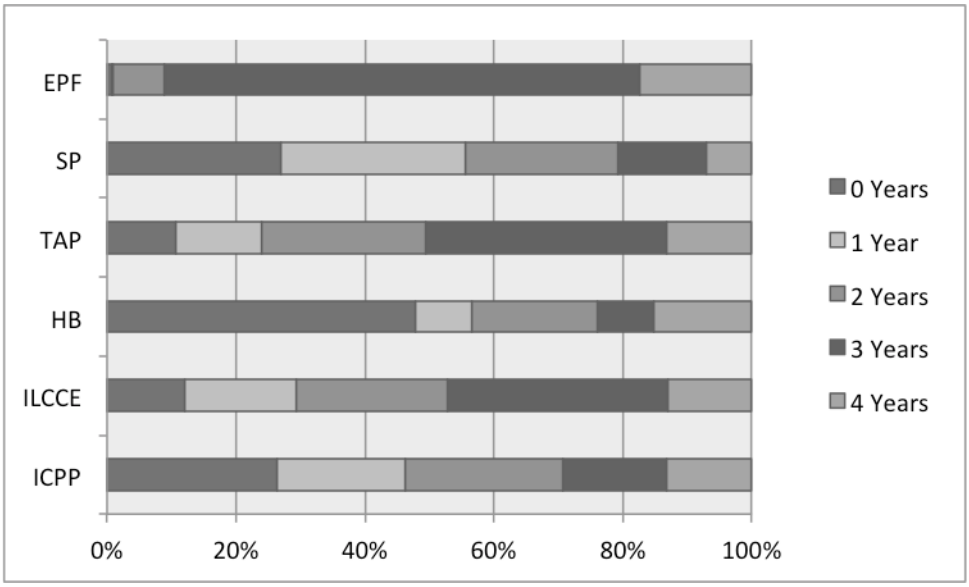
The ages of children enrolled in the initiatives reflect the intents and purposes of each initiative. EPF supports families with 3- and 4-year-olds, while SP and FRHB initiatives cater for younger children as well.

Table 12: Enrolments in ECE from ECE participation initiatives, by child's age at enrolment at December 2012. Includes all currently enrolled and registered children.

YEAR	0 years	1 years	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years or more	Not stated	Total
Number of children by age (at date of enrolment)									
EPF	9	2	94	730	184	2	0	0	1021
SP	178	189	156	91	46	3	0	0	663
ILCCE	43	61	83	121	46	0	0	0	354
TAP	31	39	75	109	39	1	0	0	294
HB1	22	4	9	4	7	0	0	0	46
ICPP	28	21	26	17	14	0	0	0	106
HB2	10	7	6	5	0	0	0	0	28
Total children*	**321**	**322**	**445**	**1056**	**328**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**2478**

***** *Children are counted in each initiative through which they participated in ECE. Therefore, the number of chidren in the 'Total' column will generally be less than the sum of the students in each initiative.*

Figure 6: Enrolments in ECE from ECE participation initiatives, by child's age at enrolment at December 2012



Summary

The government goal, announced in March 2012, is that in 2016, 98% of all children starting school will have participated in quality ECE. The national picture of participation shows participation to be 95.6% nationally in June 2013, representing an increase of 1.2 percentage points from 94.4% in June 2010. Prior participation for children in Decile 1 schools rose from 80.9% to 86.2% over this period. While these figures cannot be attributed to the effects of the Participation Programme, they set a context in which data can be interpreted.

MOE figures of enrolments through the initiatives show 2246 active enrolments at December 2012, with 3,822 enrolments since the start of the Participation programme, predominantly Māori and Pasifika children. These figures need to be interpreted with caution. ILCCE does not work directly with families (the initiative was designed to work with ECE services to improve their responsiveness to priority families) and the factors behind a family enrolling their child in a centre in a cluster in which ILCCE was working are unknown. We do not know the reason the families enrolled their child in the centre, whether the families had already attended ECE, or the duration of attendance. Only two of the ICPP projects were directly providing some limited ECE provision (one day per week at most) as ECE delivery was not a feature of this initiative either.

SP and HB initiatives cater for younger children, while EPF supports families with 3- and 4-year-olds.

Many children have left initiatives—some for school and others for another ECE service. However, we do not know where some 1160 children left to or the reasons why.

5. Effectiveness of initiatives in increasing participation

In this chapter, participation is looked at by individual initiative with attention drawn to how effective initiatives have been in increasing participation, the strengths of each initiative, what works for whom and why, and what could be improved.

Intensive Community Participation Programme (ICPP)

ICPP are community-led participation projects established to address the specific reasons children are not participating in ECE. Projects were established in communities with the lowest ECE participation rates prior to children starting school. The baseline evaluation report analyses information from interviews with ICPP scoping report providers in Waitakere, Kaikohe and Tamaki communities. For this Stage 2 report we interviewed members of Community Action Groups established in Waitakere, Tamaki, Kaikohe and Hastings. Appendix A has case studies of each of the ICPP initiatives.

How effective ICPP projects are in increasing participation

In December 2011 there were seven enrolments in ICPP initiatives—this had increased to 88 in December 2012. Of the 106 enrolments at the end of 2012, 41 of these children identified as Māori, 39 as Pasifika, 46 as Asian, five as European/Pākehā and one as other ethnicity. 77 were in an area classified as 8-10 on the NZ deprivation index.

However, enrolment in ICPP projects is not the best measure of effectiveness in increasing participation since these projects work mainly to promote participation in existing ECE services through, for example, networking and organising events and publicity in community forums. Waitakere ICPP had recently purchased a van to transport children to ECE. Of the ICPP action group members whom we interviewed, only two had established ECE services. The ICPP in Hastings had set up a playgroup in the park and a Samoan Pasifika playgroup. The Waitakere ICPP had set up a cabin at Ranui caravan park, where a teacher works with children and families, and a playgroup at the school for one morning a week.

Strengths

The strengths of ICPP are in

- providing publicity about the value of ECE, e.g., through community events, such as play days for families and children that include information and promotion of ECE. Tamaki ICPP developed a directory of services in Tamaki that support families and children, including ECE services. Kaikohe ICPP set up a drop-in centre, “a creative child-friendly space right in the middle of town” for whānau to change their baby, have a cup of tea, discuss issues etc, and where ECE services information is available;
- parenting workshops, such as Positive Parenting, and advocacy services. Hastings ICPP established a multicultural advocacy service to identify barriers and support families in dealing with WINZ and other government departments;
- building local networks of collaboration and support amongst ECE services, participation initiative providers, community and government organisations. In Tamaki the network coordinator visited every ECE service in the community and gathered support for building a local network. The coordinator does a stocktake of needs and gaps every six months. This has enabled a move from “working in silos” to “a

more coordinated streamlined way … that serves the interests of the child". According to the coordinator this is supporting less duplication of efforts;

- funding novel initiatives to meet the needs of the community, such as the cabin in the caravan park and the playgroup in the park. Each of these initiatives brought ECE into a non-threatening environment in the community where young children were located and enabled access to community services through bringing in people from community organisations; and
- gaining funding from community grants and involving local community in ECE.

Through these initiatives, ICPP providers are playing vital roles around generating understanding of the value of ECE, supporting ECE services to collaborate and respond to family needs rather than compete, and designing some innovative solutions to get some families into ECE and to support families in a variety of ways.

Who ICPP works for and why

ICPP works for whole communities where deprivation is high and where children's prior participation in ECE before starting school is low.

ICPP addresses the needs of families by taking a community development approach rather than imposing pre-arranged solutions on communities. A local Community Action Group works with ECE services, local families, and community and government organisations to plan some specific initiatives, build networks and generate public understanding of existing ECE services and their value. In this way, it represents a shift away from a market model to a somewhat more planned approach for ECE provision in specific communities. This enables solutions to be tailored to what suits families in individual communities. The approach further recognises that ECE on its own cannot be expected to address the social, economic and health issues that face many of the families in these communities. The collaboration with community and government agencies offers a way for families to access some wider support.

What could be improved?

It would appear that the main issue facing ICPP Community Action Groups is uncertainty about what will happen when the contract ends (after three years). Community Action Groups close to this time had fears that the project would not be sustainable without MOE funding. Both MOE staff and Community Action Group members argued that decisions about new contracts need to be made in a timely way so that good staff members are not lost. There was a view that funding needs to be ongoing in order to retain positive initiatives and approaches.

Initial scoping reports that identify barriers to ECE participation need to be based on sound research and make specific recommendations to be useful in guiding the Community Action Group.

Engaging Priority Families (EPF)

Engaging Priority Families initiatives are intensive support programme for 3- and 4-year-olds and their families, aimed at leading to enrolment in ECE, regular participation in ECE, support for learning at home and a successful transition to school. EPF intent is that providers can work with families for as long as two years and three months; long enough to make the idea of participation integral to families. EPF providers seemed more likely than other initiatives to refer families to social and health services. Providers have extensive connections with ECE and community services.

How effective EPF are in increasing participation

As at 31 December 2012, the number of children that were enrolled in ECE though the EPF programme was 814, more that double at the same point a year earlier (390). In total, 1121 children had been enrolled in ECE through

EPF initiatives by that point. Just over half of the EPF children identified as Māori (472) and 423 identified as Pasifika. In addition to this, 697 of these children lived in an area classified as 8-8 on the NZ deprivation index. This shows that the target groups of Māori, Pasifika and low socioeconomic groups are forming a large part of the EPF families.

The target age for EPF children was 3- and 4-year-olds. Table 12 earlier in the report showed that 71.5% of children of the enrolled children were aged three at the time of enrolment, 18% were aged four.

In addition to enrolled children, there are also 207 currently registered children. These are children whose families are working with providers but who have not currently entered into ECE. Over the two years to 31 December 2012, 1536 have been registered by providers, 415 more than have entered into some form of ECE provision.

Strengths

The key factors that make the EPF initiative effective in increasing participation include relationship building; a brokering role in respect to health, housing, and other social services; providers often delivered a range of initiatives or had services to support families; were connected with many ECE services in their communities; acted as go-between for often vulnerable parents with ECE services.

Underpinning the work conducted by EPF providers was the ability to form trusting relationships with families with high needs. This was said to be essential to the ultimate goal of engaging families with ECE.

With many EPF families facing economic, social and health issues, a brokering role by EPF providers in respect to health, housing, and other social services was essential in working to alleviate some needs of families, some of whom were so overwhelmed by these needs they were unable to prioritise education for their child. EPF providers were often situated within an organisation which delivered a range of initiatives or had services to support families. The intensive nature of the work, with one-on-one home visits by a case worker to families, and the length of time spent working with families provided the opportunity to make a difference in terms of needs.

A further strength of EPF providers was the extent of their connections to ECE services in the communities they worked in. EPF providers visited or made contact with the majority of services in their communities. As above with parents, relationship building was a key factor in supporting EPF parents to participate in ECE. EPF providers worked hard to build relationships with ECE services. This provided a platform for the negotiation of minimal or no fees on the part of EPF parents, negotiation of access where waiting lists were an issue, and other barriers such as provision of food and transport.

EPF providers were also essential in enabling access to ECE services, working with services to encourage responsiveness to families with high needs, and supporting services in finding solutions to issues.

> Some centres won't take us because we work with those families and they don't want the problems with school sores and whatever so they shy away. But the ones we can make relationships with we show that if there's a problem with a family then we can go and help sometimes.

Where EPF families were unable to be placed in an ECE service, providers engaged them in alternative programmes such as HIPPY or Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, the Correspondence School.

The flexibility of EPF providers and the strong relationships they build with families means that children can enter into the form of ECE that works best for the family and the child, provided these are available.

Table 13: ECE services in which EPF children are enrolled

Service types	Children currently enrolled in ECE through EPF
Education & care centre	421
Home-based service	37
Kindergarten	197
Kōhanga reo	49
Playcentre	10
Playgroup	59
Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu—Correspondence School	27
Data not available	14
Total	**814**

Who EPF works for and why

The ethnicities parents involved with EPF identified with were predominantly Pasifika and Māori with at least one child aged three or four who had not previously attended ECE. Many families had more than one child five years of age and under.

Most of the EPF parents who were interviewed or responded to surveys had little or no transport, and were on benefits or low incomes. Some of the EPF parents who participated in interviews were familiar with multiple agencies including Child Youth and Welfare and Family Start. Some parents interviewed had poor educational experiences themselves that have impacted on their ability to engage with resources in their communities.

Interviews with EPF parents and their providers also indicated that many struggled with the paperwork required to enrol their children in ECE. Some parents did not know the process of how to enrol a child and had received mixed messages from people known to them about how to go about this. Some also talked about their lack of confidence and felt that they would be judged if they walked into a centre to make enquiries. All spoke highly of their providers and their key worker. In these interviews they often referred to their key worker by name and indicated that they see them more as a friend than an agency. This was a clear distinction between the EPF initiative providers and other government agencies. The support of EPF providers was essential in alleviating social issues prior to them engaging in ECE but also in organising transport, negotiating fees, and introducing parents to a very unfamiliar environment.

When it comes to identity, language and culture many EPF parents were either disengaged from their culture or felt that identity language and culture should be transmitted in the home, rather than in ECE. Māori and Pasifika caseworkers work with EPF families to support them in this, finding ECE services where families felt most at ease.

What could be improved?

There appear to be four key issues for EPF. One is balancing the need in the community with the number of families the EPF contract stipulates they are to engage in ECE. The second is the focus on children in each family aged three and over; the third is the non-responsiveness of some ECE services to the families they worked with. The fourth issue is raised by the researchers - a question about the extent to which a family is empowered by a brokering arrangement.

There are waiting lists for EPF support in some localities. EPF providers work to contracted targets, and were prioritising families according to need, noting that some families were on a waiting list for up to three to four months.

> We can go over the numbers but don't have the funding or the staff capacity to do that.… Then you are looking at priority so it's not always first in gets supported but you are looking at priorities; if a family presents with high needs than they take precedence to those that have been there [on the waiting list] three or four months prior to that.

Flexibility around targets and the opportunity to renegotiate would improve this issue.

In addition the intent of EFP is that providers focus on 3-5 year old children not participating in ECE but work with the whole family. EPF providers would like to focus on all the children in the family, including younger children who might benefit from taking part in ECE..

Non-responsiveness of some ECE services to the high needs of families EPF providers work with is an issue which providers do address through building relationships. However on a wider level this is an issue requiring professional development.

Finally, we were not able to ascertain the extent to which EPF families are empowered to do things for themselves. Where the EPF coordinator plays a brokering role and advocates on behalf of the family, a question remains about what happens when that support is withdrawn.

Supported Playgroups (SP)

SP are certificated playgroups, with regular support from a kaimanaaki/playgroup educator and are sited in areas with low ECE participation. SP were located on church sites, in school grounds, on marae or in other community venues. Development of SP as an ECE service was intended to increase ECE participation where families, in particular Pasifika families, wanted to attend alongside their children.

How effective Supported Playgroups are in increasing participation

Supported playgroups had the fastest rise in enrolled children after the initiatives were introduced. At the end of 2011, 444 children were enrolled and a year later 663. The number of children that have ever been enrolled in supported playgroups at the end of 2012 was 1571, the highest of any initiative. SPs also displayed the greatest difference between numbers that were ever enrolled and currently enrolled, showing children are "moving through" supported playgroups as well.

Of the 663 children who were enrolled at the end of 2012, 49.6% identified with Māori and 44.6 as Pasifika. The vast majority (595 or 89.7%) also lived in an area that is classified as 8–10 on the NZ deprivation index, the highest for all initiatives.

The ages of children involved in supported playgroups are generally younger than for EPF with most children between the ages of zero and three at the time of enrolment.

Strengths

The key factors that make SP effective in increasing participation include knowledge of and networks within communities, and the ability to fit provision to the needs of the local community, previous experience with Ministry contracts, provision of an environment where families feel safe and connected, support for language, culture and identity, and low or minimum cost of attendance and limited need for transport.

Having strong community networks was a key strength of SP providers. The connections within and across communities meant it was possible to source people from with communities who could broker relationships with local families, and source local venues and so help establish playgroups. Community hui were commonly undertaken to connect to the wider community prior to establishing playgroups in order to involve parents. In some localities ICPP providers were helpful in supporting access to local knowledge.

> In conjunction with community networks, previous Ministry contracts was said to have left providers more experienced and confident about providing the services that were needed.

SP providers talked about relationship building as essential to building trust. They commented that it was important to accommodate playgroups to the needs of different parent groups in order to provide a familiar and therefore safe environment. As one iwi provider said:

> Because they had the relationships established already. This was with families and centres. Draw on knowledge base of community needs already.

Provision of an environment families were connected to was another aim of SP providers. In conjunction with relationship building, this could lead to ownership of playgroups by parents.

> Tuakana–teina relationship happening between the school community and the supported playgroup so that's one way; another way is that the families themselves that attend the playgroup and their whānau have developed a relationship with the playgroup so they feel kind of feel very supportive and protective of it as well.

Provision of SP which supported language, identity and culture was another key way in which providers encouraged participation by families who would otherwise not engage with mainstream ECE services. One provider described their playgroups in the following way:

> They have done a lot about finding out about the languages, using their greetings to welcome them, putting up nametags in both languages to encourage families to continue in the use of their language.… Tikanga is part of everything they do—not just waiting for Māori Language Week. Each group is unique to the needs of the community and they have the skills within that group to provide for their families.… Very good in Nuie language so they continue to maintain Nuie language in the group and they have Nuie grandparents from the Nuie community who come with their grandchildren.

Further, one of the key strengths of the SP initiative was the addressing of cost barriers, both in terms of free or minimal cost ECE provision and in many instances provision of food.

> Encourage them in—playgroup with resources; if we said donation they wouldn't come. We provide all the refreshments—morning tea as well as lunch. We have found if they don't have food to bring, then they don't bring their children—it is a four-hour time to stay … if you are wanting families to come in then you need to provide for them. Of course once they come and they see they are welcomed, there's no necessity for them to bring anything, then over time they start to bring stuff.

In many instances local provision addressed any barriers to transport.

Who SP work for and why

The ethnicities SP families identified with were predominantly Pasifika and Māori, although New Zealand European, Asian and 'other' ethnicities including African families also attended supported playgroups.

The SP families who were interviewed or responded to surveys were generally engaged with their local community and interested in accessing resources available to them. They tended to be aware of what was available or have the ability to enquire about what services were in their area. Those parents who were less engaged in the community, particularly Pasifika families, were introduced to playgroups by family members or friends. Māori whānau appeared to attend because of input from others in their community or word of mouth.

The close location of SP to families as they carried out daily business was an essential factor in parents finding out about them, with parents commenting that they passed by local churches and saw a playgroup, went to a local community house for budgeting support and saw a pamphlet, or went to the local school and saw the playgroup operating. Being able to walk to playgroups was important to parents as this made them accessible where transport was an issue.

Parents liked the fact that they could attend with and learn alongside their children. This was very important to those parents who were unwilling to leave their children to be cared for by others. As one parent said:

> I want me more involved to help me learn alongside them.

Many parents seemed to have a strong awareness of the benefits of ECE and therefore the impact on their child's education. Parents talked about the opportunity for their children to start their learning early.

> For me it is an opportunity to start school earlier than normal … and progress to primary school.

In some SP language, culture and identity were pivotal to participation. This was particularly evident for Māori and Pasifika whānau/families but also for other cultures where English was not a language spoken at home. The recognition of religious beliefs was also important to Pasifika families.

What could be improved?

It seems that SP face particular issues impacting on sustainability. These are retention of trained coordinators with experience in ECE, the sustainability of the playgroups once Ministry contracts have finished, and sourcing of venues with limited funding.

For SP providers the sustainability of playgroups was a concern to the point that some wondered if the group could continue once the structure provided by their umbrella organisation was withdrawn. There was also concern that without the umbrella organisation providing professional development the quality of provision may diminish.

> Some of the conversations we have had with the Ministry include are some of these groups ready to wing it on their own? Some are but they would lose the structure in providing ongoing support and the training because once we withdraw they won't get that.

SP providers said that in order to address this issue they were building capacity amongst parents at the playgroups. However, this meant that trained educators continually needed to be replaced.

Providers stressed that there was a need for a transition process for playgroups once contracts had finished in order that parents have the skills to take on the roles, such as budgeting and other management tasks, once provider support was removed.

Another aspect of the SP initiative which could be improved is support in sourcing venues. Providers noted that, particularly where there is a need for multiple venues, this could be difficult due to budgetary constraints. It is important that venues are suitable and accessible to local families which may have a cost associated.

Flexible and Responsive Home-Based (FRHB)

The aim of Flexible and Responsive Home-Based (FRHB) initiatives is to either expand existing services and community agencies into home-based ECE delivery or to transition informal care arrangements, with children in the care of whānau, family or neighbours, into licensed and certificated ECE environments, either home-based or other. FRHB focus on home-based care for children with up to four children to one carer. The caregiver/educator is supported by a coordinator with regular visits to discuss the learning environment for children.

How effective home-based initiatives are in increasing participation

The home-based initiative has had the lowest participation rates so far with four children enrolled in the year to 31 December 2011 and 46 in the year ending 31 December 2012. The total number of children ever enrolled in the initiative is 70. Of the children currently enrolled in the home-based provision, 18 identified with Māori and 12 with Pasifika. 28 lived in an area identified as 8–10 on the NZ deprivation index. Just under half (48%) were aged under one year at the time of enrolment, 20% were aged three years and 15% aged four years.

Strengths

One of the key strengths of the FRHB initiative is the connections providers have made with other agencies also working with families in their communities and the platform this provides for sharing of information where relevant, supporting recruitment of families and referrals to support families. For example, one provider was part of a network where all agencies in the area come together to share what they do. This enabled the coordinator to bring back information to families and to be in a position to, for example, make public health nurse referrals and vice versa. Another provider had formed a community partnership with an ECE organisation to support children attending both home-based care and other ECE.

Another key strength was the focus on finding a key person to work in the community, with local knowledge, connections and an understanding of the families they worked with. As one provider said this person was their entrance into the "opening of doors" and thus being able to work with and recruit families.

> If it comes from the wrong person or the wrong source they will take no notice of it whatsoever. But if it comes from a trusted person in the community, they will almost, it seems that they will almost do what that person says as the respect is so high.

Further insights can be gained from a provider who agreed to end their FRHB contract with MOE because they were not recruiting enough families. Despite their best efforts, they were not able to find caregivers/educators or recruit families to meet their targets. The account highlights the critical importance of good community relationships in order to fit into the community.

Who FRHB works for and why

Families using the FRHB initiative tend to be looking for care in situations where there are low numbers, and like the low ratios. The make-up of families varies according to locality. In one locality families were all either Māori or Pasifika, lived in areas of deprivation and had few resources in the home. They had limited or no knowledge of the ECE in their community. Some families in other areas were from other countries and saw the home-based care as an opportunity for their child to be cared for in a home environment where the caregiver is responsive and they learn to play with others, be happy and learn the English language before school.

Many families preferred the home environment because it gave "connections with their own culture and then that feeling of sense of belonging".

Developing a sense of trust and extended family with the caregiver/educator was important to FRHB parents. As explained by a provider:

> They are looking for respect, they are looking for understanding, they are looking for people that are listening to them as people and honouring the needs that they have for their children.
>
> There is a real closeness between the educators and the families and often the educators almost become surrogate aunties or grandmas or whatever.

It was also important to families that the caregiver/educator lived close to them as transport was an issue.

What could be improved?

Comments would seem to indicate that the structure of the FRHB model requires further thought. Is this a valuable model or does it require restructuring in order to better meet community needs?

The model placed limitations on providers working in low socioeconomic areas. Firstly there are issues in finding home environments that meet the required standards and secondly in sourcing funding to upgrade the environments so they meet standards.

At this stage in the evaluation FRHB have been established in some communities; however, finding caregivers/educators who meet the criteria but also whose homes met the licensing criteria blocked progress in meeting targets.

> There are barriers to finding the right educators in the areas. People have indicated that they would like to be an educator but in going into the home [the HB coordinator] has come across some … situations that actually have deemed the property against our licensing criteria to be not only a little bit unsafe but hugely unsafe.

Furthermore, as noted by a provider who agreed to end their FRHB contract with MOE because they were not recruiting enough families, a large stumbling block in regard to the actual model was the unwillingness of families to transition to the licensed and certificated model. Pasifika and Māori families in informal arrangements could be unwilling to take payment.

Another issue faced by providers was the lack of clarification around geographical boundaries for recruitment. This could be an issue where it appeared a provider was working in another's area, or, providers could have met targets through widened boundaries.

The example of a kindergarten association that used a TAP 3 grant to set up a home-based scheme, with apparent success for educators and families, offers ideas on how the FRHB scheme could be improved. The association not only recruits educators from the target area, it also puts in its own resources to bring homes up to licensing standards, such as using the association builder to make modifications to houses to meet safety requirements. Educators are required to undertake a six-week (two days per week) training course, which results in their obtaining an NZQA Level 3 certificate. Childcare is provided during the training course. Finally, educators are required to bring their children to a playgroup once a week where a qualified teacher takes the programme, modelling and discussing teaching and learning and offering workshops. The FRHB educators are supported by a qualified teacher coordinator. The foundation offered by the association through its existing professional and

cultural support staff, its management of a variety of ECE services, and its connectedness to the local community were all factors that enabled it to work in this way.

It would be useful to find ways for providers to regularly share information, perhaps through technology, so they can exchange and discuss ideas and solutions to issues and work on the same page.

Targeted Assistance for Participation (TAP)

TAP funding is intended to establish new services and child spaces by providing grants, incentives, and partnership opportunities in those communities where new child places are needed most and are not being created quickly enough. The aim of TAP is for the servies to enrol children from its community, and to target priority families Of the two TAP providers interviewed, one had received a TAP grant to open a new centre and another had received a grant to extend current premises. Fifteen TAP providers provided information through survey responses.

How effective TAP services are in increasing participation

The TAP initiative enrolments have increased dramatically from the years ending 31 December 2011 to 2012. By the end of the first year of the initiatives (2011) there had been no enrolments to TAP funded services. However, in the second year of the programme running, this jumped to 294 current enrolments in December, with 453 being enrolled over the year. This represents the nature of the funding models with bigger and more infrastructure based projects taking longer to complete and spaces for children to be created. Of the 294 current enrolments at the end of 2012, 54% of these children identified as Māori, 44.2% as Pasifika and 88.4% living in NZ deprivation index levels 8–10 addresses (second highest for the initiatives).

Children who were currently enrolled at the end of 2012 were predominantly aged two (26%) and three (37%) at the time of enrolment, with an even split between under ones and 1-year-olds, and those aged four.

Strengths

The key strengths of the TAP providers reflected the intent of the initiative with providers working to build strong relationships with their communities and develop services that reflect the culture and language of their community and connected with families in their communities; encouraging participation by previously non-participating Māori and Pasifika families.

TAP providers commented that connecting with families in their communities was important either prior to establishment of services or in encouraging families to participate in extended services. This was said to develop a sense of ownership for the service.

One provider who had not yet opened the centre had connected with neighbours, inviting them to “come into the centre if they see us there.” This provider was actively meeting with community groups, such as church groups, and EPF providers. The centre will be an integrated centre that includes whānau rooms for people beyond the parents in the centre to use.

Building strong relationships within communities was integral to TAP provider work.

> When strong relationships exist within the community; this can only be beneficial to families. Word of quality provision spreads and more people are identifying, watching and supporting families.

Linking with the culture and languages of communities and having staff employed who reflected this was important to relationship building. Providers said they made connections through having a mix of staff that reflected the community, curriculum that that supported home languages, visiting families to explain ECE; and being responsive and open to cultural differences.

Who TAP works for and why

While many TAP families were Māori and Pasifika, families also included those from many other ethnicities, including refugees. Families often faced social, economic and health-related issues which meant they placed a lower priority on ECE. Many families were unfamiliar with ECE environments and the idea of learning for children prior to school. Other families were interested but unable to afford the cost of their children attending a service. Some families have a history of erratic participation caused by transience. Families heard about services either through word of mouth from other families using services, friends or neighbours, or through meetings with providers or other agencies in communities.

As outlined above in the section on strengths of TAP initiatives, the focus of providers on addressing the needs of communities both through building relationships within communities and establishing familiar relationships but also through accommodating the identity cultural, language needs of families was essential to why TAP initiatives encouraged and were successful in supporting families to participate. In addition, as seen in the low or minimum cost flexible model developed by one provider, families' needs for different types of participation—sessional, school-day or full-day—were met.

> We have a weekly model, a school model, and a sessional model. We want to cater for all the different needs of the community. The 20 free hours, we think, if the session are four hours so basically a child can come for four hours a day, five days a week for free without charging any fees on top of that. Because it is a low socioeconomic area the fees structure has to be quite low as well.

What could be improved?

It would appear that the key issue facing TAP providers was the length of time they had to wait for either resource consents, or, once these were acquired, building consents from local council. This created uncertainty for providers in terms of their timeframes for opening; and therefore challenges in recruiting families. As providers said:

> Our resource consent came though pretty quickly because there was a bit of work done by somebody in the community before us. We are just waiting for our building consent before we can officially start.… We are just waiting.

> TAP providers are often offering upgraded or new facilities to their communities. Some of these are still in planning, consent and building stages, making working with their communities challenging at times.

While providers continued to work within communities while waiting, perhaps this is an area where increasing connections with the relevant agencies could support clarity around the relevant bureaucratic processes if not expedite the consents.

Identity, Language, Culture and Community Engagement (ILCCE)

ILCCE initiatives provide identity, language and culture support for clusters of services that have available child spaces in areas of low participation. The intent of ILCCE is to increase responsiveness to community through professional development and so increase the engagement and participation of local families.

How effective ILCCE projects are in increasing participation

According to MOE figures, ILCCE enrolments have shown an increase in the second year of the initiatives. This could reflect the time needed to build relationships with centres, for this then to translate to changes within the service and then on to attracting parents. As at 31 December 2011, 88 more children were enrolled in ECE in centres supported by ILCCE initiatives. By the end of 2012 this had increased to 354 more children. Interestingly, 41.2% of children identified as Māori and 30.2% as Pasifika, the second lowest rates of these ethnicities across all initiatives, and yet in the one that highlights identity, language and culture as the focus. However, it is not possible to say whether these enrolments came about because of ILCCE initiatives or whether children would have attended anyway. Nor is it known whether children had had prior ECE experience.

The most common age at enrolment was three years (34%) with 1- and 2-year- olds (17% and 23%), 4-year-olds (13%) and 1-year-olds (12%) also being enrolled.

Strengths

ILCCE initiatives supported ECE participation by encouraging centres to be more responsive to their communities. Often, management was encouraged to examine its fee charging and enrolment policies so that families could attend at no or low cost. Providers worked to encourage the development of a culturally rich community in ECE where people feel welcome. An important attribute was said to be the "right person" to work with services, people with strong connections to the community or local iwi.

Who ILCCE works for and why

ILCCE works for communities where ECE participation is low amongst Māori and Pasifika, and where there has been a reluctance to use existing services. ILCCE has improved responsiveness of services through examining identity, language and culture and how best services can meet the needs of, in particular, Māori and Pasifika families. As one provider said there was a

> sense of connection or engagement they feel [families] when they hear their language being used in the services—around those needs.

In addition ILCCE was said to have supported the removal of cost and transport barriers, with creative policy changes being made to address these as a result of discussions about how to engage families.

> They don't have transport—what can we do about it? If they have a family interested who only want a couple of hours how can we resolve that? This had actually led to a lot of creative policy changes for these services to be able to accommodate these families.

Where ILCCE was combined with another initiative, such as EPF, this also strengthened opportunities to eliminate transport and cost barriers.

In one instance the changes filtered out from the actual ILCCE centres to their umbrella organisation with a participation coordinator employed to work with services not taking part in the initiative.

What could be improved?

The engagement of services in removing barriers to participation indicates that it could be useful to extend this particular form of support to other services in areas of low participation. Feedback from providers of other initiatives, such as EPF, and families has highlighted non-responsiveness of some ECE services as a factor in excluding families from some services. Working with services with a focus on belonging, welcoming relationships, language culture and identity could be beneficial in addressing this.

The Ministry of Education has developed a new programme aimed at meeting this need: Strengthening early learning opportunities for children, families, whānau and communities through teaching 2013 - 2015 (SELO). SELO operates through the provision of Ministry-funded Professional Development to services to support quality service provision for priority learners (Māori, Pasifika, low SES, children with special education needs and vulnerable children).

6. Conclusion

A key message from the evaluation is that every family wants their children to 'live well' and to be educated. Their goals, short and long term, were often for their children to go beyond what parents themselves had reached in levels of education. Reasons for not enrolling a child in ECE were complex. Sometimes ECE was not understood to be part of the education system, which was seen to start with school at five years. There were fears about the child's safety and wellbeing in the care of strangers. Barriers to ECE participation of cost, restrictive enrolment policies, waiting lists, location and the nature of provision resided within the ECE service or government policies rather than parents.

Relationship building was core to successful increases in participation, underpinning collaboration and the sustaining of connections which made the work of the programme possible. This was particularly so in the engaging of families, which was clearly intensive and time-consuming not just for EPF but for all providers, and providers reported that at times it was one step forward and two back with families, many of whom had complex needs.

In line with policy intent, participating families are predominantly Māori, Pasifika, and low socioeconomic.

The findings highlight the significance of ECE services connecting with families to generate a sense of belonging, of feeling connected, of membership. These have been described as primary tasks for children's transitions (Brooker, 2008) and our findings show they equally apply to parents. Connection between home and the ECE service enables funds of knowledge and cultural capital to be shared to the benefit of all participants.

Overall, those participation initiative providers who connected well with families were located in the community, experienced in working there and had expertise in delivering their initiative. Two initiatives were particularly effective in encouraging positive working relationships with families. Supported playgroups formed relationships with family and community that facilitated power sharing and enabled funds of knowledge to be shared between home and ECE service. The idea of shared endeavours (Rogoff, 1994) in supported playgroups seems to be one of the factors encouraging parent and whānau participation, and its flow on to benefits of learning and support for parents and whānau. ILCCE providers contributed to enhancing responsiveness through their work with ECE services. On the other hand, EPF played a brokering role and was not a direct provider of services. As such EPF providers are dependent on provision that is available locally and responsive to family needs. Our findings show that some existing services lack responsiveness and are bypassed by EPF providers and parents for this reason.

A key feature of the success of the Participation Programme is that no initiative stands alone. Connections and collaboration across government and community agencies, across initiatives and within communities were shown to be essential to the removal of barriers and the aim of increasing participation. Where initiatives failed to work this was in part due to competition for targets and limited fit in the community. ICPP initiatives were important in creating and supporting networks within communities and have seeded the development of Community Action Groups which work toward a better future for communities.

In summary, the Participation Programme initiatives generally contributed to increases in participation not only by meeting targets but through the engagement of families. Overall, initiatives are responsive to communities they work within both in regard to looking to remove barriers but also through linking families to ECE environments with which they identify and have a cultural affinity.

Several providers (TAP and EPF) reported that transport was being offered to bring and collect children from the ECE service: this is seen as a way to overcome a barrier and encourage participation. This raises questions about how to generate a sense of community, connect with home and support transition to school if the ECE service is on the other side of town from the child's home and parents rarely or never go to the centre.

The findings underscore the desirability of local ECE centres within walking distance of homes. Local centres could offer integrated support from an education base such that the work being done by EPF providers is offered through opportunities within the centre itself. These models exist in many countries, including the United Kingdom and Australia, and can be highly successful in providing a range of ways for families to enter into ECE as well as offering support for families through a 'one stop shop'.

ICPP is playing a pivotal role in coordinating ECE services and community organisations, and along with TAP 3 is open to developing new provision that is responsive to communities who determine the nature and shape of provision themselves. The suggestion made by providers and MOE staff for community planning processes could open exciting possibilities. Broström (2003), discussing Te Whāriki from a Danish perspective, has suggested the need for more discussion of how we understand and define our visions for children, so that we can incorporate the visions into the activities we create with children. Early childhood services can be places for genuine discussion with parents, whānau, staff and community about aspirations for children, the nature of provision and teaching and learning.

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Appendix A: Case studies of ICPP

Tamaki Learning Champions

The Tamaki ICPP was the first of the ICPPs to be established, in May 2010. It became named the Tamaki Learning Champions.

> In naming something there is ownership of it, we have a stake in it. We had a workshop and cluster groups and it took us about an hour to figure out a name. We wanted to name it, something that reflected our values and what we wanted to create, so Tamaki Learning Champions was great and we could use the acronym TLC.

The people involved in the TLC group worked with the Transforming Tamaki Project (TTP) that identified early learning as an area of interest. TTP brought together leaders in the community and different people in the sector. They 'brokered' the funding with MOE. One critical understanding was that the MOE did not tell them what to do, but worked collaboratively with them.

> It was always about transparency, being owned by the community, finding solutions from within the community and working collaboratively with the Ministry, with TTP, and across the sector to achieve the outcomes. It was everyone sitting down, in a hui, formal setting and saying here are our aspirations for our children in a kōhanga, in playcentre etc., everyone had the opportunity to create a shared vision.

Membership of the group is open.

> It has always been an open group where people can come in and if they need to take leave of absence should things overtake their busy lives [they can]. We have representation from most of the service classes in Glen Innes.

The TLC was described as "all the people that were already involved in ECE". The contract for MOE funding needed to be given to a legal entity; this was Anglican Trust for Women and Children in the first year and then Teuila Consultancy. Eventually, the coordinator said they would like TLC to become a legal entity in its own right.

A scoping report done by CORE Education identified barriers to participation and recommendations about what could be done about these. The scoping report was described as "fitting with how we are" and was used "as a foundation document to lead into the contract and onto the action plan".

> The person who wrote the report was also delivering PD in the community and working with a lot of centres, and the way the methodology was done was she would do some door knocking, rock up to Pak'n'Save so it was a really perfect fit for this community, getting the real meat.

In the first year, a lot of discussion took place about what could be done, but "no one did it" because of busy lives. A coordinator was appointed to have a big overview—"and since then the delivery of what the TLC group has done has grown exponentially".

Each year a 12-month action plan is created, based on the original scoping report. One of the issues was "the right centre for the right child, so that's a huge focus for us". Several strategies are addressing this issue: a network is

being built so needs and gaps are understood, a service directory has been published, and big events are drawing attention of families to ECE provision and helping services better understand the needs of families.

Network

In the first six months the coordinator visited every service in the community and gathered support for building a local network. The network is enabling greater collaboration among services and a stocktake of needs and gaps.

> … when I first started everyone was working in silos, very few were working across, and if they were it was Tongan language nest with Tongan language nest, or Cook Islands with Cook Islands. The kōhanga was just working with kōhanga. The conversations had started with ICPP but really it was just working in silos, everyone was worried about getting my numbers and my contract fulfilled. So when we came on it was "How could we work in a more coordinated streamlined way that serves the child?" We started to look at, okay, some of our centres are full so how about you cross refer to HIPPY where there are spaces, so we really started to look at localised solutions. We got one Samoan language nest but 20 on the wait list and there are spaces in playcentre—if it is right for your child. So we met all the services, started to identify the gaps. Every six-months I do a stocktake of the community, where the gaps are, where the need is, what are the issues and how we are addressing that.

One issue was to "work smarter" so that services did not duplicate efforts.

Service directory

Another barrier identified in the scoping report was that people did not know what ECE options there were. A poster, service directory and website were created. The poster is displayed in public venues. The service directory lists all the services in Tamaki, with information about their philosophies and contact details. The list includes nine early childhood licensed centres; 11 home-based programmes (including home-based ECE), HIPPY and PAFT, Engaging Priority Families contractors and health providers); four ngā kōhanga reo; five Pacific language nests and six supported playgroups.

Big events

One strategy is to hold "big events":

- Events for families and children, such as fun days, street play days

  We have another event aimed specifically at parents, 'Gladiators'. So we try to approach families, the community and providers from a whole lot of different angles, but should they want to come to every one of these, that's fine as well.

Service providers are able to communicate with families in the community, for example, services with vacancies were invited to come and share what they do with the community. This enabled providers to explain their service to the community and show what they do, and providers to hear from people in the community and perhaps "change the way they might do things with families in this area". "It's a less threatening way for people to talk to providers."

> At the kids fun day there is no paper—our community do not respond to that. All the providers run free activities that give the families a sense of what they provide. Playcentre did messy play and talked to parents. SP did collage. Our kids get a free day, families go. Providers get a chance to promote themselves by providing activities the kids like and parents will think are cool. We try to take away as many barriers as we can. One, so that is relationship building at the get-go. Two,

> parents will go "that's cool", "do you like that baby". The parents will see that and get that when the parent see the child engaging with that centre, they will then talk to the centre about what is possible for their child. We say to the providers, the whānau are shy, they may be whakama, so please be friendly, have a conversation around their babies. Everything we do is strategic.…
>
> We have a lot of grassroots engagement so when we have a playday we go into the street, set up our play gear and we see the parents and talk to them, and we ask the parents if they are involved in ECE, what are you interested in, and if it is OK to pass their name on. I only have enough time to do what I have to do so we give them to the EPF contractors and they follow up and it is their job to support them into early learning. So it is about better ways of working.

The coordinator has encouraged EPF providers to be strategic about how they recruit so that they are not all "knocking on the same door four times"—they each take responsibility for an area.

- for providers to get together in networking and sharing strategies.

  > We also run another event where we invite the providers, "it takes a village". That enables providers to get together and brainstorm and strategise about how they might change the way they deliver, or the way they do their recruitment. Whatever aspect of their operations that will be more supportive of our families here.

- Parenting events, for example Dad's Night, and "Gladiators of Change", which began with a two-night positive parenting evening in the Glenn Innes community.

  > Throughout the two nights as many as 170 mothers and fathers attend sharing and listening to parenting advice and testimonies to advance their own parenting skills to strengthen their whānau and community for a brighter Glenn Innes future.… The main kaupapa [theme] was empowerment shared by guest speakers.… Children were welcome and care was provided free of charge.

- Mātauranga Māori day celebrating matariki, including workshops and activities intended to promote Mātauranga Māori to the people of the Tāmaki community. Mātauranga Māori day is run by the Māori community.

  > We don't tell them what to do, we honour the fact they have networks.… We will support you, here is the money. [From ICPP]
  >
  > We don't just hand over the money—the groups come to TLC with their plans, budget, focus, who's invited and so on. We also do a Pasifika Fanau Fun day.
  >
  > That is the Pasifika ECE collective. Key people from language nests and providers.

TLC works with agencies and organisations that can offer wider support for families. It emphasises a holistic and empowering approach.

> It is about championing joined-up approaches. We know that our community needs housing, does that affect families, it sure does. From my kōhanga alone we have had eight babies ripped out, because of this. So we are committed to working with TRC, the Tamaki Redevelopment Company … but also the GI Family Centre and they provide Toolbox, Social Work in School etc. It was also co-developed and implemented with HEART—they are about healthy relationships, leadership, it's an anti-violence campaign. Primarily we are funded for education but we also have the mobile dental van there, we have Plunket, 'cos we know that—the reality for our community is that

> education is number six—keep a roof over our heads, don't give the wife the bash.… So we need to impact that, let's all work together. If anyone wants to do anything in our community now they come to us.

The success of TLC to date seems attributable to

- a scoping report that provided good guidance on actions and was based on research;
- employment of a coordinator who was accountable for the action plan, and done by someone who was "proactive, committed, good at delegating, can run events, can't be shy, a good mediator";
- a focus on being strategic in developing an action plan and working with providers;
- building community networks, facilitating providers to take responsibility for their own areas of expertise and be accountable;
- taking a holistic and empowerment approach; and
- enabling providers to hear directly from each other and families, and to identify for themselves changes that might be needed.

Despite knowing the contract would come to an end after three years, uncertainty and sustainability are now big issues.

> Here's the hardest thing, our contract ends in June and we don't know if we are going to roll over, so it's three years this year. That's probably the most difficult thing. Can someone let us know if we are going to continue or not. We are still going to do it. But we are also clear that with the Ministry we are able to do so much more. It is a little scary. I said to [Ministry staff member] when she came, "You've got till the end of May or I will start looking for a job."

This echoes views expressed by MOE staff and discussed in the next chapter that decisions about new contracts need to be made quicker so that providers do not lose valuable staff.

The TLC has managed to attract promises of some funding from the Tamaki Redevelopment Company and the Ministry of Pacific Affairs. It needs also to register as a charitable trust so that it can attract community grants. But "the beauty of having confirmed funding from the Ministry is that you are not looking for funding all the time, you can actually do the work".

Other ideas for the future are

- purchase of a van

  > One of the things the scoping report talked about was a van. That is a huge barrier in our community. A mum is not going to walk to a centre in the middle of winter with four kids training. We'd love to get a van that all the centres can share. Edukids pay $50 a pop to get their children to the library. So let's get a van, we could use it for Plunket, HIPPY could use it for their play days, group meetings with parents.

- working on transition to school with a current provider who runs the primary school ICT and has a network of schools already.

  > Now we have come to the end we say this is what works, what we have learnt, how do we fund it. Or if not, what then are the key points and strategies we will focus on as a group? So we are hoping for the best and made a few steps forward in terms of brokering relationships.

ICPP Hastings

The ICPP Hastings is the newest of the ICPPs.

The ICPP has established a Community Action Group with representatives from ECE services, MOE, community organisations including Māori Women's Welfare League, and Participation Programme initiative providers. All are highly experienced in ECE and understand the community. All but one of the representatives attending the focus group interview were from the community.

The roles played by each participant who attended the ICPP focus group meeting show that each member is finding solutions to participation barriers that are unique to the community.

Scoping report

The Community Action Group is working through the recommendations of the scoping report. According to participants the recommendations being followed through in the first instance are

1. Contracting providers.
2. Promoting ICPP in community forums.
3. Attending community forums about children.
4. Informing community groups about the food cooperative.

   One of the things we are very concerned with is to make sure we don't forget the other identified areas not just Māori, Pasifika but also the low socioeconomic and the children with special needs. In fact defining what special needs is was one of the hardest things to do but we have sort of come to an agreement now.

A view, shared by more than one, was that the scoping report was not particularly useful because it was generic, told the CAG what they knew already and did not go into depth on what to do.

New initiatives

The CAG are setting up several new initiatives and events, some of which are using Participation Programme initiatives for funding:

1. Establishment of a multicultural advocacy service to identify some of the barriers families have with WINZ and other government departments.

   That was a big thing that came out of the scoping report … that whānau didn't know the things they were entitled to and to go to WINZ and get that advocacy support. A key recommendation was to have an ECE broker that would be that advocate, which is why it should be established.

2. TAP funding (see above).
3. A playgroup in the park.

   So the way our playgroup started was that [a council survey of a high needs street] said families wanted some more parent information and so they invited the Ministry to the playground and to bring pamphlets and stuff like that to the park. I managed to go along to that and I asked them the question, "Do you have a playgroup in this area?" They said not that they knew of, maybe down the road. So I said, "Would you utilise one if we set one right up here in the park?" and they said, "Yes". They have been coming regularly and love it. We plan to do the same thing in Mayfair and Flaxmere with the lady from the council because she has an awesome relationship with the communities she works with. It is about us working together.

> Housing NZ had pulled all their units down so they put a park there and all these mums live around that park.
>
> That park is like their hub where they are meeting. This is their community hub and they have active community members that are now running it. You know last weekend they set up a movie in the park and someone bought a projector down. They are camping in the park, they camped overnight and that's one of the roughest streets in Raureka and they were camping in the middle of it.

The playgroup invites agencies to come and talk in a non-threatening environment, such as the librarian.

1. A café in the park where all ECE services were invited to attend. "We had a carnival in the park and then a café in the park in Camberley."
2. A Pasifika fono. "They are actually taking organisations to the community and not expecting the community to go to them."
3. A Samoan Pasifika playgroup as part of the ILCCE initiative.
4. Providers meeting bimonthly to share information.

Two CAG members talked about further plans:

1. Ways to publicise ECE.

   > One of the things we floated at CAGs … was to look at in early February having an early childhood day in Flaxmere. We can bring the services out to the park and then publicise it to get the parents who haven't got children in ECE and they can see. It's in an unthreatening environment you know you are not in a service you are not in a centre you are out in the local park. A playgroup in the park.

2. Setting up support and/or emergency care for children of hospitalised families

Suggestions for improving ICPP

- Funding needs to be available and ongoing.

  > Some of these answers are going to be outside the square and we need to be open to understanding that if that's going to work then we need to find a way of funding it so it can be ongoing. It is no use setting something up and then six months down the track we suddenly find out it's folded because they couldn't get the pūtea.

- Targets to be realistic—it takes time to establish relationships
- Length of the ICPP contract

  > This is not going to be an issue that in three years time that is miraculously going to be over. No matter how much work these people put in, I mean no matter how many people that they are getting in, you need to be mindful that at the other end there are five year olds heading to school. There will be new children coming in.

ICPP Kaikohe

The ICPP Kaikohe was established in June 2012.

Scoping report

Participants were critical of the scoping report for not providing new information, and not being sufficiently specific about recommendations. There was a view that the research methodology needed to have sampled more families and specified the nature of the sample (for example, how many were non-participating families).

Unlike other ICPPs, it does not seem that the scoping report was used for guidance because of these issues. These were developed from scratch by the CAG.

Initiatives

The initiatives put in place by this ICPP respond to the three goals set out in the contract:

1. To raise awareness of the value of ECE.
2. To increase participation in ECE.
3. To successfully coordinate, integrate and project manage the implementation of initiatives in the Kaikohe ICPP.

Early in the ICPP, following the setting up of the CAG, a CAG coordinator was appointed whose initial role was to establish an action plan. Actions were brainstormed, first within a small group where the participants brought in their own ideas from events and actions they had seen elsewhere. The coordinator used her knowledge of the scoping report done for Hastings to bring in some new specific ideas from that report. The Community Action Group then discussed these and the coordinator brought them together for MOE approval. The action plan drew very little on the scoping report. Seventeen actions are set out in the plan, which aims to have 80 non-participating children from birth to six years participating in ECE. These are

Goal 1: To raise awareness of the value of ECE.

1. Establish a Community Action Group.
2. Organise street playdays. Provide incentives to participate.
3. Collaborate with frontline services to distribute ECE information to non-participating whānau and establish direct contact with the Project Coordinator.
4. Organise a Kaikohe whānau Fun Day to promote ECE services.
5. Set up premises in town for whānau to access ECE services information.
6. Deliver play workshops in town to promote the value of play and ECE.
7. Involve Iwi, Hapū, Marae.
8. Establish a Community Trust for the purpose of sustaining these initiatives.

Goal 2: To increase participation in ECE.

1. Identify non-participating whānau, collaborate with frontline health/social workers. Set up referral system and database.
2. Support non-participating families to access information about ECE services, childcare subsidies, whānau support.
3. Investigate transport service for those requiring transport.
4. Create database of ECE services/Directory/Community calendar/Website www.kaikohe.co.nz

5. Create service profiles to promote ECE services. Promote ECE providers in central location and distribute information to new and non-participating whānau.
6. Develop transition programmes from home to ECE, provide incentives for whānau/children enrolling in a service.
7. Develop transition programmes from home to ECE to primary school by establishing a professional learning network between schools and ECE services.
8. Engage focus groups to evaluate effectiveness of initiatives.
9. Promote the new ECE facility.

Community Action Group

Consultation is done by the coordinator and other members of the CAG, including MOE.

> So for me as a coordinator what was my job? Our community action group hasn't really evolved that much in terms of having community input. Our community doesn't come to the community action group meetings but that consultation is done between meetings and brought to the meetings. I find that our parents and our whānau are more comfortable in a smaller group and more comfortable with their own rather than showing up to a meeting that is predominantly attended by the Ministry or an iwi agency or other people delivering contracts.

The CAG is connecting up existing services through an ECE network meeting held once a term, with all existing services and relevant education, health and social services and local businesses. The area covered extends from Kaitaia to Whangarei and both coasts—a huge area. "People like the B4 School checks, Plunket, Sport Northland." At an early meeting, the coordinator presented the plans.

> I got their feedback as well and it was from that meeting that people offered their services to do workshops and be involved in developing the transition programme from service to centre and centre to school. Also [Name] was there and she was keen to be involved, like Special Ed as well with providing resources. So that's how [we are] basically connecting with our early childhood network here. With our services it was a matter of going into our centres face to face introducing myself and letting them know what my role was. Basically it was a way for centres to promote themselves so that I could be a contact point for whānau, who could then have an understanding of what's required for enrolling at different centres. I could be that in between person to help make that happen. Things like childcare subsidies and information about that so I've been in to WINZ and talked to the manger there and also the case manager for vulnerable families. It's a matter of that face to face meeting with them and so going into our midwives I've done that with them. Our public health nurse and our Kotahi Trust up the road there that do alternative education. So that initial community network happened face to face.… (Coordinator)

> I think it's going fantastic. It's not just our ECE networks that are really involved it's people like the business community that are supporting it. The community board, it's been on the agenda for some time in this town that something like this has been required. For it to happen really just needed someone to do it and it would have happened or could have happened a long time ago because the talk and support … have been there but it just hasn't happened. I think that's really key to ensure that for it to be sustained those key people are involved in the plan to see it sort of be taken up by the community or have it still operating. I'm quite hopeful it will because there's a lot of support for it. I'm not quite sure that this town needs another community trust although that is

> one of the initiatives to keep it going because when the contract finishes so does all the funding. (Coordinator)

Another key action has been to establish a drop-in centre which opened on 30 November 2012, with a facilitator working three days a week there. The facilitator wrote:

> I don't think in our community we can be as black and white as "put your child into an ECE centre now!" and for this reason the drop in centre has made up for all the spaces in between.… Te kohekohe offers a creative child friendly space right in the middle of town so that every parent with tamariki 0–5 can access it. It gives parents the opportunity to STOP for a minute, change or feed their child, have a cuppa before they move onto the next thing and it opens the door for us to talk to many things pertaining to parenthood.…
>
> One of the drop in centre walls is dedicated purely for the ECE centres of Kaikohe to basically promote themselves.

The drop-in centre is running workshops about child "stages of development" once a week.

There are four formal participation initiatives in Kaikohe: two supported playgroups, an ILCCE working with a cluster of seven licensed centres, and a TAP-funded project due to be opened in June 2013.

Waitakere ICPP

The Waitakere ICPP was established in 2012. A coordinator was appointed in September 2012. She is experienced and knows the community well.

A big issue was said to be a need for ECE provision. In addition, one frustration is that a playcentre on school grounds is not being well utilized by families, suggesting work needs to be done to encourage service responsiveness, collaborative working together, and full utilisation of buildings.

> We have a play centre in front of the school but for various reasons the play centre philosophy and our parents there just isn't a buy in. That has been a frustration along the way.

Another issue is parents wanting to "drop their child off".

The school deputy principal identified another issue that playcentre was removed from the community and that children attending came from outside and went to schools outside.

> It's in our community but it is not serviced by people from the community. The people who are utilising the playcentre are people that are driving here in cars that parents of students that come to our school could never imagine driving. They are lovely people, don't get me wrong, but they are not people that our community identifies with. Here is the playcentre and here is the school and if you go down to the play centre as I do and try to engage and ask them if they want to come for preschool visits, let's try this and try this, and the answer comes back well these children are not coming to your school. These children are going to decile 10 schools and are not even interested in looking at a decile 3 school, which is so sad but in a nutshell that is the reality. It's two totally different demographics.

Interesting initiatives include

- A cabin at Ranui caravan park where a teacher works with children and families.

  I'm involved with the one where [Name] is our teacher and it's at the Ranui caravan park. The aim there is to involve the under fives in ECE in a little cabin at the caravan park … well, a lot of those families are transient so are often not in any other form of ECE and for some, it is the first time in ECE. It's about encouraging them to participate and when they move on, because we have had a lot of families that have moved on, and she has been talking to them about finding a service in their area.

  [Interviewer] So they tend to come in when they need somewhere to stay. Do you do any brokering arrangements for them to find out about early childhood?

  Yes we do, we actually have HIPPY come in and Barnardos also comes in. A lady comes in once a week, and she does interaction and plays alongside and brings her ukulele. Our networks are growing with those other services as well. [Interviewee said the numbers had dropped after families had moved out and more promotion was need.] They've got a barbecue and the hub is putting on a barbecue so having the opportunity to go to that. We have got the local library coming in and telling stories and singing songs—she comes once a week. She has brought in some books and jigsaw puzzles today for one family. We've even done a trip out to the other playgroups in Ranui. My aim is to … because I lived in this caravan park for a short time with my nine children as a single mum so I emphasise that I used the playgroup and the local kindergarten and that all my kids went to the local primary, intermediate, and college.

- A playgroup that runs at school for one morning a week and play days that move around so there are different venues each time (currently once a fortnight). A good relationship exists with the school: the deputy principal sends out the flyers and identifies families with preschool children. A footpath sign has been put up to let families know about this.
- A van had just been obtained because of information, including through the scoping report, that transport was a main barrier to participation.

  I guess the challenge is now [to recruit users] and I spent some time … introducing myself around to absolutely everybody who was in the building. . . . For people to use the van we actually need to know who they are, we need to have somewhere to go to pick them up. That is what we are not getting at the moment, people are not approaching us so that is part of our current challenges at the moment.

- The school has opened a room for HIPPY so that the HIPPY programme is available to families.

Features that seemed to support this group were

- CAGs members who had close understanding of the community;
- a school deputy principal, who was highly supportive of ECE and worked with the ICPP group and initiative providers, made her school open to ECE groups, and made school information available; and
- a willingness to tailor actions to local circumstances.