

National Report Summary

ERO publishes evaluation reports on education issues of national importance. This handout is a summary of a recent national report - it captures the key points and highlights findings which you may find useful. The full report is available on our website - www.ero.govt.nz

Working with *Te Whāriki* (May 2013)

Priorities for Children's Learning in Early Childhood Services (May 2013)

In 2011, the ECE Taskforce report, *An Agenda for Amazing Children*, recommended an evaluation of the implementation of the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*.

Since then, the Education Review Office (ERO) has completed a national evaluation that will help inform any future review of *Te Whāriki*. In this evaluation, ERO asked:

How effectively are early childhood services across New Zealand determining, enacting and reviewing their curriculum priorities to support education success for every learner?

ERO's findings are published in two reports: *Priorities for Children's Learning in Early Childhood Services (May 2013)* and *Working with Te Whāriki (May 2013)*.

Essentially, these reports are about the unique nature of each service's curriculum – how the everyday programme early childhood services provide responds to the children who attend. While one report focuses on the way early childhood services used *Te Whāriki*, the other discusses the extent to which services implemented a curriculum that reflected their identified priorities for children's learning.

Both reports conclude there is room for improvement. The self-review questions on the other side of this summary are a good starting point for all early childhood services.

Working with Te Whāriki

The broad nature of *Te Whāriki* allows for many different interpretations. ERO was particularly interested in the links between the framework of principles and strands and each service's curriculum.

While most of the 627 early childhood services reviewed were making some use of the framework of principles and strands, there was considerable variation in the understanding of *Te Whāriki* and teacher practices.

Services need to look at their implementation of *Te Whāriki*, review its effectiveness and find ways of working in-depth with *Te Whāriki* to achieve the best outcomes for the children at their service. There is also an opportunity to better understand *Te Whāriki* as a bicultural curriculum and what this means for the children at the service.

Priorities for Children's Learning in Early Childhood Services

In this report, ERO looked at services' priorities for children's learning, how these are decided and the ways in which they influence all aspects of what teachers do. Once again, there was a wide variability in how well services identified and responded to their priorities for children's learning.

The report emphasises the importance of understanding the aspirations of parents, as well as the strengths and interests of the children in order to give a relevant and responsive curriculum. A particular area of concern is the lack of responsiveness to Māori and Pacific children in many of the services.

Better assessment and self-review practices will enable services to be more responsive to all children. So too will the ability to listen, respect and respond to what parents and whānau expect of the service.

Self-review questions and indicators for early childhood services

Priorities for children's learning

- To what extent is our **self review** ongoing and responsive to identified priorities for learning?
- To what extent are our identified priorities for learning evident in our **curriculum design and implementation**?
- To what extent is children's progress towards meeting our identified priorities for learning evident in **assessment**?
- To what extent does our assessment information show that we recognise and respond to the **different cultures, ages and interests** of children in our service, and lead to positive outcomes for them?
- To what extent is children's learning in relation to our identified priorities **visible to parents, whānau, and children** in our assessment?
- To what extent do **parents, whānau and children know** about their child's learning in relation to our identified priorities?
- To what extent do we know how useful our assessment processes are for supporting learning continuity when children **transition** within the service, between services, and to school?
- Are there any **other ways** we respond to our identified priorities for children's learning, and how well do we do this?

Te Whāriki

- How explicit is *Te Whāriki* in our service's curriculum?
- To what extent is our service's curriculum based on all aspects of *Te Whāriki*?
- What aspects of *Te Whāriki* are included? Principles, strands, goals?
- Does our service give greater emphasis to some aspects of *Te Whāriki* than others? Why?
- How is *Te Whāriki* visible in our service's curriculum? Which aspects are visible?
- Are we just using the language of *Te Whāriki* or do we have a deeper understanding of what the principles and strands mean in our service?
- What informs and guides our bicultural curriculum?
- How do *Te Whāriki*, *Ka Hikitia* and *Tātaiako* inform our bicultural practice?
- What do we know about the impact of our bicultural curriculum for Māori children? For all children in our service?
- What framework(s) do we use to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of our service's curriculum? What aspects of *Te Whāriki* might help us to undertake such evaluation?

FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at www.ero.govt.nz/national-reports

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The Child – the Heart of the Matter