Early Years Research Centre submission on Strategic Plan for Early Learning 2019-2029

Sara Archard, Simon Archard, Sonja Arndt, Bronwen Cowie, Margaret Carr, Jeanette Clarkin-Phillips, Olivera Karmenerac, Raella Kahuroa, Janette Kelly, Linda Mitchell, Lesley Rameka, Sally Peters

11 March 2019

The Early Years Research Centre includes a group of scholars who have built a national and international reputation in the following three areas of research in the early years: pedagogy, policy and community connections. These areas form the three themes of the Centre research programme. The Centre has a social justice agenda; it aims to make a difference for young children, early years teachers, families and whānau in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Early Years Research Centre provides a platform for coordinating, connecting and creating research that influences policy and informs scholars worldwide.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Early Years Research Centre welcomes the development of a ten-year 'Strategic plan for early learning' and opportunity to write a submission on it. We fully support a staged plan in areas of fundamental importance that sets a positive direction for the future and participatory processes to support it.

The Early Years research Centre

The Early Years Research Centre at the University of Waikato is part of the Wilf Malcolm Institute of Education Research in the Faculty of Education. It includes scholars who have an active interest in one or more of three areas of research, with a focus on the early years. The 'early years' are defined as children aged 0 to 8 years, so the research is in early childhood centres and schools.

The three research themes are pedagogy, policy and community connections.

Pedagogy

Our research on pedagogy has emphasised interactions between teachers and children (or, in the school context, students), with an interest in the mediational means provided by peers, places and objects in the environment. The research has foregrounded the following topics:

- assessment for learning, the documentation of learning in ways that make a difference to learning;
- the role of technology (especially, but not entirely, ICT) in supporting the teaching and learning;
- children deepening their understanding of topics of interest and the role of families as mediators;
- intersubjectivity, conversation analysis of social interactions amongst peers and between teachers and learners;
- strategies for enhancing children's curiosity;
- Mathematics learning in the early years;
- *Te Whatu Matauranga: Weaving Māori and Pasifika infant and toddler theory and practice in ECE;*
- play and arts-based pedagogies supporting belonging for refugee and immigrant families.

International work

We have two projects in developing countries, one in Timor Leste and one in Nusa Tenggara Timur (West Timor), as early childhood experts offering technical support for teacher training, professional development and the development of early childhood programmes.

Policy

Researchers in the Early Years Research Centre are contributing to policy discussions and making a difference to the early years education landscape. They have advised the government on curriculum and quality pedagogy in a number of arenas, and acted as advisers and evaluators in other countries. Three EYRC members (Professor Claire McLachlan, Associate Professor Sally Peters, and Dr Lesley Rameka) were members of the curriculum update writing team. Professor Margaret Carr, Professor Linda Mitchell and Dr Lesley Rameka are current members of the Policy Research Forum and were members of the reference group for the development of this strategic plan. Literature reviews on Outcomes of Early

Childhood Education, Transition to School, and Infants and Toddlers in early childhood provision, have been prepared to advise the government.

Our policy research has foregrounded the following topics:

- Assessment for learning. The development of resource packages for teachers *Kei Tua o te Pae* and *Te Whatu Pokeka*.
- An *Evaluation of Pathways to the Future – Ngā Huarahi Arataki*: a research contract to evaluate the ECE 10-year Strategic Plan 2002-2012.
- Participation by families in early childhood education provision. An *Early Childhood Education Participation Programme Evaluation:* a research contract to evaluate Ministry of Education policy on family participation in ECE services.
- Numeracy. A *Numeracy Development Project Evaluation* that included a project in Maori medium classrooms.
- An analysis of *Growing Up in New Zealand* data about mothers' emotional wellbeing and their infants' and toddlers' relational competencies: a research contract funded by the Ministry of Social development.
- A *teacher/educator workforce and governance* project to understand the complexity of early childhood teachers' work and systems to support it.

International work

Evaluation of early childhood programmes outside New Zealand. In January to March 2013 Linda Mitchell and Janette Kelly completed an evaluation of early childhood provision in Timor Leste.

Community connections

Since the early years covers the age group from 0-8 years, the Centre's research also includes projects in the early years of school. A major contribution to research in this theme has been on transition – from home to early childhood provision outside the home, and from early childhood setting to school. A literature review in Transition to school was prepared for the government. The research has foregrounded the following topics:

- Museum research. Collaborative research with Te Kōhanga Reo o Mana Tamariki in Palmerston North, and with Tai Tamariki Kindergarten in Wellington.
- Integrated services in early childhood centres that provide health and community services, beyond and in addition to care and education.
- *Learning journeys from early childhood into school*. This includes two TLRI projects (one in English-medium, one in Māori medium) followed by a number of TLIF projects.

International work

Associate Professor Sally Peters led a successful bid for the Early Years Research Centre to become part of an international collaborative research project that focuses on a comparative study of the pedagogy of educational transitions (POET). This includes research teams from Scotland, Sweden, New Zealand and Australia.

General comments

The government objectives are "for a high quality public education system, which puts the wellbeing of learners at the centre and provides all New Zealanders with the opportunity to discover and achieve their full potential, engage fully in society, and lead fulfilling and rewarding lives". The Strategic Plan draft uses the term *early learning* to refer to ECEC. Instead, we propose use of the term "early childhood education and care". The wider purpose of ECEC is grounded in discourses of democracy, equitable opportunities for all children to care, education and development, equity, social justice, diversity and commitment to biculturalism. We stress that Te Whāriki and additional teacher resources in ECEC advocate and support children's holistic learning and development which means "learning is our development is our learning". It is not just about early learning, it is education in its broader sense.

Te Whāriki is a bicultural and bilingual curriculum that expresses commitment to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Within the strategic plan, reference to Te Titiri o Waitangi is limited to a one page superficial statement (p. 9), with no elaboration of its meaning and intentions. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is not referred to again throughout the plan. Nor are two key strategy documents and their recommendations referenced at all: *Tau Mai te Reo* (Ministry of Education, no date-a), developed "to ensure that there is a connected and cohesive approach to education contributions to support and strengthen the Māori language" and *Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of Education, no date-b), which reaffirms the outcomes that all learners have access to high quality Māori language in education and holds as a vision "Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori". We would expect to see these commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, to te reo Māori, as an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand, and to Māori students woven meaningfully through all the goals and associated actions of the draft Strategic Plan.

In addition, *Our Code, Our Standards* (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017) is very clear about teachers' obligations including:

> demonstrating a commitment to tangata whenua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in the learning environment;
>
> respecting the diversity of the heritage, language, identity and culture of all learners;
>
> affirming Māori learners as tangata whenua and supporting their educational aspirations (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017, pp.10-13).

Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners is a resource providing further practical guidance.

In a retrospective study summarising ten years of reporting on ECE settings, the Education Review Office (ERO, 2016) identified that:

> only a few services were fully realising the intent in practice by working in partnership with whānau Māori and through the provision of a curriculum that was responsive to the language, culture and identity of Māori children... Te Whāriki needs to be well understood to be implemented as a bicultural curriculum. While the intent of Te Whāriki is recognised in some services, greater expectations and more guidance will encourage services to implement a bicultural curriculum for all children (p. 10).

The Early Years Research Centre expects to see these commitments made clear in the Government's Strategic Plan for Early Learning 2019-2029. This will require reworking the plan to make visible genuine commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and actualisation of a bicultural curriculum, and actions to achieve these.

Goal 1: Quality is raised for children by improving regulated standards

We strongly support this goal since improving regulated standards is a key mechanism for enhancing quality. Teacher qualifications, ratios, group size and professional development are "structural" features of quality that provide "facilitating conditions" for high quality ECE (Mitchell, Wylie, & Carr, 2008, p.8). As the Ministry of Education-commissioned review of outcomes of ECE found:

> The kinds of institutional, funding, and regulatory arrangements that support provision of good quality ECE will enable [positive child and family outcomes] to be achieved, e.g. through regulating recommended standards for staffing (qualifications, ratios, and group size), opportunities for professional development for all teachers, opportunities for teachers to investigate teaching, learning using inquiry approaches (Mitchell & Cubey, 2003), and support for good quality provision to be available in all communities. This review gives substantial support for continuing to give good quality ECE priority in New Zealand's efforts to improve outcomes for children (Mitchell et al., 2008. p.9).

In recognition that these structural features need to be interwoven to enable a strong impact, we recommend that goals and timeframes are adjusted.

1.1 Regulate new adult-child ratios for infants and toddlers

We support increases in regulated ratios of 1:3 for infants and 1:5 for toddlers.

Recommendations

That ratios of 1:4 for infants and 1:5 for toddlers are regulated by 2023 at the same time as regulation for 100% qualified teachers in teacher-led centres.

That ratios of 1:3 for infants are regulated within the term of the strategic plan.

The bringing together in timing of regulations for qualified teachers and for improved ratios makes sense in terms of the government goal to raise quality. Low quality in centres catering for babies and toddlers has been a concern of ERO, and raising quality is especially important for this age group. Increasing ratios without a parallel commitment to providing qualified teaching staff would perpetuate the unsatisfactory situation of the very young child being in group settings with unqualified staff often for long hours. A rationale for both ratios and qualified teachers being improved together is provided below.

> Qualified teachers are likely to draw on their knowledge and experience of children and pedagogy to offer the kinds of cognitively challenging adult–child interactions that are linked with gains for children. The NICHD ECCRN (The National Institute for Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network) study (2002) using structural equation modelling, found a mediated path from structural indicators of quality (teacher qualifications and staff: child ratios) through process quality to cognitive competence and caregiver ratings of social competence. These authors suggest that "more caregiver training may lead to better interactions between children and adults, while lower ratios may lead to more interactions" (NICHD ECCRN, 2002, p. 206) (Mitchell et al., 2008, p.8).

1.2 Require early learning services to support secure and consistent relationships with children

We support this recommendation.

Further recommendations

That exemplars of effective practices to support secure and consistent care and positive transitions in a range of settings are developed by an expert team following a tendering process, and published by the Ministry of Education.

That professional development opportunities are made nationally available to support understanding and use of the exemplars.

The locality-based evaluation of the first strategic plan (Mitchell, Meagher Lundberg, Mara, Cubey, & Whitford, 2011) found that the Ministry of Education published assessment resources, *Kei Tua o Te Pae*, that were accompanied by government funded professional development, offered a successful model for supporting change for those teachers who used the resources and took up the professional development opportunities that were afforded. Impressive findings from the evaluation were the large positive shifts for some centres on every indicator of teaching and learning practices (assessment, planning, evaluation and self-review), teachers' understanding of *Te Whāriki* and ECE service relationships with parents. These were directly associated with high and continuing take-up and usage of Ministry of Education funded and published assessment and self-review resources, professional development, COI dissemination and employment of registered teachers. These were strategic plan initiatives.

1.3 Incentivise for 100% and regulate for 80% qualified teachers in teacher-led centres leading to regulation for 100%

We support this goal, but provide further recommendations around timeframes, funding and incentives.

Recommendations

That the funding band for centres employing 100% qualified and registered teachers is immediately reinstated so that costs are met.

That 80% qualified teachers are regulated in 2020, and that 100% qualified teachers are regulated in 2023.

That as well as funding incentives, a range of other incentives is developed. Consideration should be given to adopting incentives used in the previous strategic plan, i.e., grants to enable existing staff to study, scholarships for teacher education courses, relocation grants and allowances for teachers to return to teaching, provisionally registered teachers (PTR) grant to support newly qualified teachers to become registered.

The lesson from the previous strategic plan indicates that fast progress can be made in lifting the levels of registered teachers in teacher-led centres when government sets firm targets, and provides funding and incentives to achieve these. The locality-based evaluation (Mitchell et al., 2011) showed that under these conditions, nationally, 37% of staff in teacher-led centres held teacher registration in 2004. This rose to 56% in 2006 and 64% in 2009.

1.4 Develop advice on group size, the design of physical environments and environmental factors

We support this recommendation, and propose that a short timeframe is set for this work

The investigation needs to happen quickly so that regulations are changed and any new centres under planned provision meet the new regulations.

1.5 Gazette *Te Whāriki* to support shared expectations

We support this recommendation

1.6 Prevent low quality service providers from operating additional services

We support this recommendation and make an additional recommendation

Recommendation

That a moratorium is placed on the development of new services until all provision is planned

Our response to Goal 4 provides rationale for this recommendation.

1.7 Increase monitoring of services

We support this recommendation

Goal 2: Every child is empowered through timely access to the resources they need to thrive

2.1 Ensure equity funding supports children who need it

We support the proposal to review equity funding and targeted funding

Recommendations

That any review is informed by prior evaluations of equity funding and Targeted Funding for Disadvantage.

That in addition to Equity Funding, integrated and timely access to external advice and support is available to support children with additional learning needs and from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The evaluation of Equity Funding undertaken soon after it was implemented (Mitchell, Royal Tangaere, Mara, & Wylie, 2006) and the Ministry of Education 2018 study *Pre-implementation evaluation for Targeted Funding for Disadvantage* should be used to inform the review. In particular, the evaluation of equity funding identified that three of the four particular components of Equity Funding: low socio-economic, language, and isolation, were largely being used as intended. It suggested that the fourth, special needs and non-English speaking background, may need rethinking to ensure that the most

productive use of this money is made for target children. Only a few services receiving this component used it for improving provision for these groups of children, and some services had children in these targeted groups but were not receiving the component. Those with a high number of children with special needs were more likely to spend Equity Funding on increased staffing, professional development and building modifications. Spending for children from non-English backgrounds was more likely on additional staff from these backgrounds, resources and excursions. The need which the special needs component could not reach so well was for access to external advice and support: services wanted advice and support available through established agencies. The need which the non-English speaking background component could not meet so well was for permanent staff members who were multilingual, and access to interpreters and translators. Our current research in centres with refugee and immigrant families shows that these latter needs are still pressing today, and likely to become greater as New Zealand society becomes more ethnically and linguistically diverse.

The Ministry 2018 evaluation stressed the importance of funding stability.

2.2 Co-construct progress tools to support children's learning and wellbeing

Recommendations

This action statement will be considered for implementation further down the track, when other actions are implemented. It could be considered only after: 1.1 new adult-child ratios for infants and toddlers is actioned; 1.3 the vision of 100% qualified teachers; 1.4 improved group size; 1.6 poor provision is a thing of the past; 2.1 equity funding supports children who need it.

With that proviso, this action statement will be amended to read **"Co-construct a range of progress pathways and tools for formative assessment of children's learning and wellbeing within the framework of Te Whāriki"**. These formative assessments will be implemented by teachers/kaiako who know the children well.

The 'formative' nature of this co-construction (currently in the text under this action statement) might get lost if it is not in the action statement. A formative assessment will include a commentary on the facilitating environment, so these tools and pathways will be enabled to make recommendations for changes to the context and resources that will be necessary/valuable for the pedagogy here. It is valuable that 2.2 comes under Goal 2: Every child is empowered through timely access to the resources they need to thrive. Note that we have already formative assessment formats that can do this work (and professional development on the quality could be another recommendation): good Learning Stories and Paki Ako include a 'What Next' section that includes a recommendation for the teaching team, the whānau and the child that also includes the resources and opportunities that are available or could be developed in order to enhance the learning and wellbeing of the child. These are formative assessments so the messages in the Kei tua o te pae resource are relevant here, especially perhaps Book 9 (Inclusive Assessment – Te Kāhui Aromatawai). A range of progress pathways would reflect different cultural frames and contexts (Carr, Soutar, Clarkin-Phillips (in preparation); Ministry of Education, 2009); discussions with whānau and the local school re ongoing progress pathways are especially valuable, and assessment portfolios can include a page of explanation; Transition Portfolios (see the Mangere Bridge Kindergarten examples in the book 'Crossing the Border') should reflect progress pathways, often unique to the child but always consistent with the outcomes in Te Whāriki. See Hartley, Rogers et al. (2012); Carr, Lee, Ramsey et al (in press); Carr & Lee (in press), Carr, Smith Duncan et al. (2010).

The footnote 'This work would be informed by the scoping work that was carried out in 2011-2013 by the Research Policy Forum Working Group etc' should become part of the MoE text under the action statement.

2.3 Expand the number of early learning services that facilitate wrap-around social services to support children and their whānau.

We strongly support the intention to expand integrated services and share information about these.

Recommendations

That community-based ECE centres that are well-connected within their communities are supported through funding and staffing (e.g., for co-ordination, release time) to facilitate wrap-around social services.

That each community-based centre receiving support design its own programme so that it is responsive to families and whanau and the context of its community.

That information about the 2006 Parent Support and Development projects is considered in the design of this expansion.

That research associates are contracted to co-research with the community-based centres, to support enhanced provision and to disseminate findings.

That in recognition of its research and policy consultation around integrated provision, the Early Years Research Centre is invited to have input into the design of policy to support integrated services.

The model of early childhood education as a "hub", in which early childhood education is provided alongside integrated access to inter-disciplinary teams and services has been shown to be highly successful in Canada, UK and Australia (Corter et al., 2009; Press, 2012; Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggert, 2004; Whalley & the Pen Green Centre Team, 2007) and in Aotearoa New Zealand (Clarkin-Phillips & Carr, 2009, 2012; Mitchell & Meagher-Lundberg, 2017; Mitchell, Meagher-Lundberg, Arndt, & Kara, 2016). Integrated ECE services are able to offer wide opportunities for family support and possibilities for family and community participation. This model recognises the role of family and community in children's lives and is one way of strengthening a holistic education. It acknowledges the notion of parents accessing ECE centres even when they are reluctant to access other services and highlights ECE centres as "soft-entry points".

In 2016 and 2017, the Early Years Research Centre hosted two forums on the affordances of integrated ECE provision, where presentations were made about integrated provision in Aotearoa New Zealand (by Tere Gilbert about Te Kōhao Kōhungahunga, by Jeanette Clarkin-Phillips about Taitoko Kindergarten, by Linda Mitchell about a history of integration) and in Canada (Carl Corter and Jan Pelletier about Toronto First Duty) and Australia (Sandie Wong about an evaluation; and Joy McLaughlin about Doveton). Participants who were managers, government officials, academics, researchers, unionists and teachers discussed the value of integrated ECE, evidence about outcomes for children and families and potential policy directions for Aotearoa New Zealand. One outcome from the first forum was that the Early Years Research Centre undertook a national survey on the current state of integrated provision in Aotearoa New Zealand. From 350 responses, it showed access to different services, what services were available, and needs for support. Both forums discussed future policy and practice directions. We offer to contribute our expertise to development of policy in this area.

Goal 3: Investment in our workforce supports excellence in teaching and learning in all services

3.1 Improve the consistency and levels of teacher salaries and conditions across the early learning sector

We strongly support the need for improved consistency and levels of both teacher salaries and conditions across the sector and the ideas for achieving this through development of a mechanism that enables government support. Our main recommendation is that the vision is strengthened to ensure pay parity for equivalent qualifications, responsibilities and experiences is negotiated and sustained across qualified and registered teachers in the early childhood and schools' sectors.

Recommendations

That the Ministry of Education negotiate a national collective employment agreement for all qualified teachers employed as teachers in ECE settings, with the Secretary of Education named as a party to the agreement.

That parity of pay rates is negotiated in the employment agreement with the pay rates of teachers in primary schools who have equivalent qualifications, responsibilities and experiences.

That working conditions include entitlement for every teacher to access ongoing professional development and conditions to support critically reflective practice.

History indicates that equitable pay and working conditions will not happen in the largely privatised education and care sector under permissive employment legislation when individual business owners alone are responsible for employment negotiations. In particular, we can learn from the events of the 1990s when the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act 1991 removed provisions for good faith bargaining and obligations by employers to bargain collectively. In this context, individual employment contracts set by employers became the norm in education and care centres (at that time termed' childcare'), and large variations in pay and conditions within the private sector increased. That variability has largely remained. Some for-profit entrepreneurs have a vested interest in profit margins for their own gains; and staff salaries are an area of high cost where financial gains can be made by reducing employment costs (Mitchell, 2018; Mitchell & Wells, 1997).

The Kindergarten Teachers' Collective Agreement provides a model for how pay parity and parity of conditions can be achieved. After being removed from coverage of the State Sector Act in 1997, kindergarten teachers were reinstated into the State Sector Act in 2000, paving the way for the current Kindergarten Teachers Collective Agreement negotiated by the Ministry of Education, kindergarten associations and NZEI Te Riu Roa. It is a legally binding agreement whereby kindergarten associations need to allocate a large proportion of government funding to teacher salaries and conditions in order to meet the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Legislation for all teachers to come into the state sector and a national collective employment agreement negotiated as a binding agreement with the Ministry of Education would be a mechanism to support our recommendations. Furthermore, direct funding of teacher salaries as happens in the school sector, an arrangement that also existed for kindergarten teachers prior to 1992, would ensure that government funding intended for teacher salaries and conditions is used for these purposes.

3.2 Strengthen initial teacher education (ITE)

We support the recommendation to improve ITE and to require student placements be undertaken only in high quality ECE.

ITE needs to offer students a range of critical theories and pedagogies, and support them to develop critical mentality in their teaching practices. The development of 'criticality' and critical mind-set - such as capability for a critical understanding of how funding, structures, regulations, unionisation, impact on teachers' work - are necessary skills for teachers working in the complex, constantly changing, contexts of ECE. Quality initial teaching programmes grounded in critical pedagogies and placement of student teachers in high quality centres both are a key for the ECEC workforce. Included in realising "quality", ITE needs to equip students to actualise the bicultural aspirations of Te Whariki both within the ITE programme and from experience in the centres in which students are placed. Therefore, the government needs to support adequate funding of the centres taking student teachers and provide adequate support to all associate teachers to work with students.

3.3 Improve professional learning and development

We support the recommendation to develop and support a sustained approach to PLD.

Access to PLD and quality of PLD in ECE is currently variable. The Ministry of Education's PLD programme has tended to focus on problematic issues in poor quality centres and standardised and short-term initiatives such as supporting the introduction of the revised *Te Whāriki*. Comprehensive PLD opportunities need to be available for all teachers, kaiako, and educators who work with children in ECE services. PLD needs to be cognizant of the characteristics of effective PLD (Mitchell & Cubey, 2003) so that there is provision for whole centre sustained PLD, and opportunity for participants to investigate and critique their own practice. Working with researchers in participatory action research projects has worked well in Centre of Innovation programmes and TLRI initiatives; these could also be extended. A focus of PLD needs to be on biculturalism in ECE programmes.

The contracting system for PLD has not served the sector well, with excellent PLD providers finding it hard to sustain their operation when short-term contracts end. We therefore recommend a national advisory service for PLD with ability for secondments from the sector. Finally, we stress that these PLD needs to be inclusive of all services and allow diverse services to work collaboratively as well as individually – the aim of this is to re-build and strengthen professional learning communities across the sector and decrease the existing divide.

3.4 Develop a workforce strategy

We support the development of a workforce strategy and emphasise that it needs to connect with the wider education workforce strategy and with initiatives in the strategic plan.

Goal 4: Planning ensures that provision is valued, sufficient and diverse

The market approach to provision and burgeoning dominance of corporate private education and care and homebased ECE services has been actively encouraged through funding policies. The result is a radically unequal patchwork of provision and cost structures that largely favour those with the social and cultural capital of the dominant class. These developments are highly problematic. Earlier research has shown quality differentials between privately owned and community-based ECE services favouring the community sector (Mitchell, 2002; Mitchell & Brooking, 2007) and that private centres are more likely to be in high-income areas where fees can be charged. Internationally, the 2006 OECD study of

20 countries (OECD, 2006) noted that a reliance on privatised provision of early childhood education will almost certainly lead to inequities in provision in poorer communities because commercial providers are reluctant to invest in such communities. We strongly support the need for planned provision and to "turn the tide" on private provision.

4.1 Develop and introduce a process to determine whether a new early learning service is needed

We support the development and introduction of a process to plan provision and make further recommendations

Recommendations

That a moratorium is placed on development of new services until provision is mapped.

That all new ECE services seeking government funding, must meet a set of newly determined criteria around community ownership, community need and preferences, quality infrastructure, buildings and outdoor play areas.

That Ministry of Education funding for capital works is made available only to community-based services.

That a review of fee-charging and enrolment policies is undertaken with the aim of ensuring ECE service management offer ECE at a reasonable cost for families.

That a long term vision of free public and community owned ECE in which every child is entitled to a place is agreed, and targets and mechanisms are set to achieve this.

Planning provision within communities, from the basis of a shared vision based on democratic ideals, and attention to "competent systems" would be productive of a new way of thinking and an inspiration for positive change. Aotearoa New Zealand has much to learn from other countries and states where ECEC provision is mapped and needs are forecasted as a basis for planning provision, see for example, the demand and affordability study in Toronto (Cleveland, Krashinsky, Colley, & Avery-Nunez, 2016); planning for integrated ECEC Sure Start Children's Centres in UK communities; Sweden where all children 1-12 years have a legislated right to pre-school education, and most pre-school provision is provided directly by municipalities in day care centres (OECD, 2006). We support the proposal that forecasting and planning is done by the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with iwi, councils and relevant community organisations. This planning needs to ensure a coherent patchwork of community-based and public ECEC provision is established that is locally accessible and appropriate for all families, and in which every child is entitled to a place. As argued in a discussion paper (May & Mitchell, 2018) to the Reference Group for the development of the strategic plan:

> A new ECE service would take different forms in response to local contexts and the needs of children and families. Its value base would be constructed through discussion and consultation and include a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the principles and strands of Te Whariki. It would have competent financial systems and democratic governance structures that enable full participation in decision-making by its ECE community. It would empower, support and provide conditions for participants to develop as a critically reflective community.

Our first three additional recommendations are aimed at ensuring the planning results in high quality community-based provision that is well supported by competent systems of governance and management.

The fourth additional recommendation is aimed at keeping costs for families at reasonable levels and curbing potential for profiteering for private purposes through excessive fee charging and enrolment policies that require families to pay high rates for additional ECE hours over and above "20 hours free"

and for "late pick-up" of their child. Such practices have been well-documented in evaluation studies and national surveys.

The final additional recommendation is for a long term vision of free public and community owned ECE, in which every child is entitled to a place. Consistent with UNCROC principles, high quality ECE needs to be an entitlement for all children, so that access is not limited by barriers of cost, location of ECE services, or lack of suitability, cultural responsiveness and responsiveness to family needs. This will require provision to be planned so it is accessible and available for every family who wants their child to attend, and for this to be genuinely free. As in some OECD countries, the entitlement to a place could start from the date that parental leave ends (with an extension of parental leave in Aotearoa New Zealand to 12 to 18 months). As Bennett (2006, p. 144) writes: "To link the end of parental leave to an entitled place in a publicly supported early childhood service seems to be a critical element in parental leave policy that adds considerably to the wellbeing of families and infants."

4.2 Provide governance and management support for community-owned services

We support this recommendation

4.3 Support the establishment and maintenance of early learning services on Crown land administered by the Ministry of Education

We support this recommendation for community-owned services.

4.4 Co-design an appropriate funding model with Te Kohanga Reo National trust

4.5 Co-design an appropriate funding model with the NZ Playcentre Federation

We support these actions

4.6 Consider setting up state-owned early learning services with an associated research programme

We support this recommendation with some reservations

A preference, in the short term, is to revive the Centres of Innovation programme, see our comments in 5.1. This would provide examples of a range of research aims, and reflect cultural difference.

Goal 5: the early learning system, continues to innovate, learn and improve

5.1 Establish innovation hubs for early learning services

We support this recommendation

This Goal for 'places where services could access innovation expertise and research partners' is not very clear.

However, these 'innovation hubs' could revive the seven years of the Centres of Innovation programme which was abandoned mid-stream in 2009. In this programme, 20 early childhood services were successful in describing their innovative practice to gain a place as a Centre of Innovation and work in partnership with research associates. They published their work in the succession of 'Waves' books, edited by Anne Meade and published by NZCER. In our view, these chapters described Te Whāriki in action and were an excellent resource for early childhood services, and valuable for professional development. Centre of Innovation final reports were published on the Education Counts website and all participants in the programme took part in other publishing and dissemination activities.

Therefore, linked to a number of goals, we propose an updated version of the Centres of Innovation that showcase the ideals of quality public ECE.

Established on application for a five year cycle that could be extended, Centres of Innovation would:

- Demonstrate high quality in terms of infrastructure, staffing, regulations and environment;
- Illustrate innovation with an ongoing research and professional programme;
- Provide professional development for network centres;
- Combine a mix of new builds and services and existing services;
- Include national co-ordination of selected centres.

5.2 Support early learning services to collaborate with other education services

We support this recommendation

We commented under 2.2 on the opportunity for collaboration between early years services and local primary schools. This happens informally in many places and a number of teachers have been researching ways of collaborating across sectors and the benefits of this collaboration for children and their communities (see for example, Hohepa & Paki, et al., 2017; Peters, 2014; Peters & Paki, 2013; Peters, Paki & Davis, 2015). The desire to collaborate across the ECE and school sectors within Kahui Ako is evident too in a number of Teacher Lead Innovation fund projects. Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 2017) provides initial guidance for continuing children's learning pathways as they move from ECE to school. To widen the support for collaboration, formal opportunities to discuss progress from Te Whāriki into the New Zealand (school) Curriculum and Te Marautanga could be supported and teachers resourced to work on cross-sector strategies that enhance children's transition from ECE to school. Common professional development experiences could enhance collaboration initiatives, as will continued opportunities for ECE and school teachers to research their practice together. Other links, for instance with centres that focus on environment education, have occurred in TLRI projects supported by NZCER.

5.3 Support robust internal evaluation to ensure ongoing improvement

We support this recommendation

Perhaps the MoE, ERO, a well established university early years research centre, and a well established national professional development provider could form a Community of Practice for this purpose. This could lead to a number of positive developments. It might:

- develop robust internal evaluation protocols and procedures;
- construct an MoE website on research opportunities and ongoing projects;
- ensure consistent local understandings of ERO quality indicators.

REFERENCES

Carr, M., Soutar, B., Clarkin-Phillips, J., Clayton, L., Cowie, B. & Gardner, S. (in progress). *Young children in museums: Exploring spaces for creative capacity building*. London, UK: Routledge.

Carr, M. & Lee (in press). *Learning Stories in Practice*. Sage (in press, June 2019).

Carr, M., Lee., Ramsey, K., Parkinson, K., Priebs, N & V. Brown (in press). 'Te Whāriki, Possibility Thinking and Learning Stories: Tracking the progress'. Chapter accepted for A. Gunn & J. Nuttall (Eds.). *Weaving Te Whāriki* (3rd edition). Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.

Clarkin-Phillips, J., & Carr, M. (2009). *Strengthening responsive and reciprocal relationships in a whanau tangata centre: An action research project*. Wellington, New Zealand: Teaching and Learning Research Initiative.

Clarkin-Phillips, J., & Carr, M. (2012). An affordance network for engagement: increasing parent and family agency in early childhood education. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, *20*(2), 177-187.

Cleveland, G., Krashinsky, M., Colley, S., & Avery-Nunez, C. (2016). *City of Toronto: Licensed childcare demand and affordability study*. Retrieved from https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/8d0a-Community-Services-and-Facilities-Toronto-Demand-Affordability-Study-2016.pdf

Corter, C., Pelletier, J., Janmohamed, Z., Bertrand, J., Arimura, T., Patel, S., . . . Brown, D. (2009). *Toronto First Duty Phase 2, 2006-2008: Final research report*. Retrieved from http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty/reports.htm

Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. (2017). *Our code, our standards: Code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession: Ngā tikanga matatika ngā paerewa: Ngā tikanga matatika mō te haepapa ngaiotanga me ngā paerewa mō te umanga whakaakoranga*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.

Jenkin, C., & Broadley, M. (2013). Just do it. In A. Grey, & B. Clark (Eds.), *Ngā hurihanga ako kohungahunga: Transformative teaching practices in early childhood education* (pp. 12-23). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson.

Hohepa, M., Paki, V., & Peters, S. with Hawksworth, L., Gilbert, T., Hawksworth, L., Olliver, D., Anderson, T. & Hakaraia, T. (2017). *Riariakina ō rongo hirikapo From kōhanga reo to kura*. Teaching and Learning Research Initiative final report. Available from http://www.tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/projects/TLRI%20Summary_Hohepa%28v4%29.pdf

Kamenarac, O. (2019). Who am I as an early childhood teacher? Who would I like to be? *Early Childhood Folio Online First*, 1-7. Retrieved from https://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/journals/early-childhood-folio/downloads/ECFolio%2023%281%29_Online%20first%202019_Kamenarac.pdf

May, H., & Mitchell, L. (2018). "*Turning the Tide*". *Suggestions for discussion. Paper presented to Strategic Plan Reference Group*.

Ministry of Education & Education Council. (2011). *Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners*. Retrieved from https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Tataiako_0.pdf

Ministry of Education, (2009). Te Whatu Pokeka. *Early Childhood Kaupapa Māori Assessment Exemplars*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (n.d-a). Tau Mai te Reo. The Māori language in education strategy 2013 – 2017. Retrieved from https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Strategies-and-policies/Ka-Hikitia/TauMaiTeReoFullStrategyEnglish.pdf

Ministry of Education. (n.d. -b). The Māori education strategy: Ka hikitea – Accelerating success 2013-2017. Retrieved from http://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/ka-hikitia-accelerating-success-20132017

Mitchell, L. (2002). *Differences between community owned and privately owned early childhood education and care centres: A review of evidence*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Mitchell, L. (2018). *Democratic practices and policies in early childhood education and care*. *An Aotearoa New Zealand case study*. Singapore: Springer Nature.

Mitchell, L., & Brooking, K. (2007). *First NZCER national survey of early childhood education services*. Retrieved from https://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/15318_0.pdf

Mitchell, L., & Cubey, P. (2003). *Characteristics of effective professional development linked to enhanced pedagogy and children's learning in early childhood settings*. *A best evidence synthesis*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

Mitchell, L., & Meagher-Lundberg, P. (2017). Brokering to support participation of disadvantaged families in early childhood education *British Educational Research Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3296

Mitchell, L., Meagher-Lundberg, P., Arndt, S., & Kara, H. (2016). *ECE Participation Programme evaluation*. *Stage 4*. Retrieved from https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ECE/ece-participation-programme-evaluation-stage-4

Mitchell, L., Meagher Lundberg, P., Mara, D., Cubey, P., & Whitford, M. (2011). *Locality-based evaluation of Pathways to the Future - Nga Huarahi Arataki*. *Integrated report 2004, 2006 and 2009*. Retrieved from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ece/locality-based-evaluation-of-pathways-to-the-future-ng-huarahi-arataki

Mitchell, L., Royal Tangaere, A., Mara, D., & Wylie, C. (2006). *An evaluation of initial uses and impact of Equity Funding*. Retrieved from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ece/4923

Mitchell, L., & Wells, C. (1997). Negotiating pay parity in the early childhood sector. In New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (Ed.), *Closing the gap*. *Forum on equal pay* (pp. 163-172). Wellington: New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

Mitchell, L., Wylie, C., & Carr, M. (2008). *Outcomes of early childhood education: Literature review*. Report to the Ministry of Education. Retrieved from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ece/25158/48867

OECD. (2006). *Starting strong 11: Early childhood education and care*. Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Peters, S. (2014). Chasms, bridges and borderlands: A transitions research 'across the border' from early childhood education to school in New Zealand. In B. Perry, S. Dockett, & A. Petriwskyj (Eds.) *Transition to school: International research, policy and practice* (pp.105-116). New York: Springer.

Peters, S. & Paki, V. (2013). Te Whāriki: Weaving multiple perspectives on transitions. In J. Nuttall (Ed.) *Weaving Te Whāriki: Aotearoa New Zealand's Early Childhood Curriculum Framework in theory and practice* (2nd Ed.) (pp.197-216). Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Peters, S., Paki, V. & Davis, K. (2015). *Learning journeys from early childhood into school*. Teaching and Learning Research Initiative final report. Available from http://www.tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/projects/TLRI_%20Peters_Summary%28v2%29%20%281%29.pdf

Press, F. (2012). Embedding collaboration in integrated early childhood services: The strategic role of governance and leadership. *Waikato Journal of Education*, *17*(12), 30-42.

Reedy, T. (2013). Tōku rangatiratanga nā te mana mātauranga: "Knowledge and power set me free …" In J. Nuttall, (Ed.), *Weaving Te Whāriki: Aotearoa New Zealand's early childhood curriculum document in theory and practice* (2nd ed.)(pp. 35-54). Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.

Reese, E., Gunn, A., Bateman, A & Carr, M. (in press). Teacher-talk about learning stories in New Zealand: a strategy for eliciting children's complex language. *Early Years: an International Research Journal*.

Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggert, B. (2004). *The final report: Effective preschool education*. *Technical Paper 12*. Retrieved from http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/10005308/1/EPPE12Sylva2004Effective.pdf

Whalley, M., & the Pen Green Centre Team. (2007). *Involving parents in their children's learning* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Paul Chapman.