

### **Review of ECE evaluation indicators: A leadership focus (Dr Kate Thornton)**

In her introduction, Thornton says that there is a lack of empirical research focused on effective leadership practice in early childhood education. This mirrors a silence on the subject in the original *Te Whāriki* (1996). The recent revision of *Te Whāriki* (2017) provides specific guidance under each of the strands, but this is directed at kaiako leadership rather than positional or professional leadership. ERO's current indicators refer to 'leaders' without making it clear whether teachers or professional leaders is meant.

Turning to the literature that relates to educational leadership in schools, the author discusses both educational (instructional) and distributed leadership, arguing that the leadership needs of ECE centres and schools are more similar than different, and that both educational and distributed leadership are relevant in the early learning sector. She proposes that the professional learning community (PLC) model may be a useful framework for encouraging reflection on how leadership is enacted in the context of professional learning.

Thornton notes that the 'crucial place' of the professional leader is gaining recognition in the ECE sector, not just because professional leaders can provide leadership in areas such as vision and learning focus, but because whether and how distributed leadership is enacted falls largely to them.

The paper concludes by suggesting specific revisions to the indicators (Ārahi) and briefly summarising key points relating to the five guiding questions posed by ERO. Thornton concludes that the current Ngā Pou Here framework is sound, but that it should make the role of professional leader more specific.