

**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 that you may find useful. The full report is available on our website – ero.govt.nz

Engaging with *Te Whāriki* (2017)



New Zealand's early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, was updated in April, 2017. The previous version had been in place just over 20 years. *Te Whāriki* (2017) reflects the changes in theory, practice and early learning contexts that have occurred over the last 20 years.

This second evaluation report focuses more specifically on the steps leaders and kaiako were taking to:

- » decide 'what matters most' in their service
- » review and design their local curriculum
- » work with the learning outcomes to determine their priorities for children's learning.

What did ERO do?

In this evaluation, ERO gathered the data from 167 services as part of their regular ERO review in Term 1, 2018. We asked leaders and kaiako to complete a questionnaire before the onsite stage of their review. ERO review teams discussed the responses to the questionnaire with leaders and/or kaiako while onsite, and added additional comments to the questionnaire. Data was gathered in the regular ERO reviews of licensed early learning services.

What did ERO find?

See the next page for a summary of the key findings.

We continue to see a high level of awareness, with most services reporting they are aware of the updated *Te Whāriki* and nearly half of the 167 services beginning to engage with it in a variety of ways.

Leaders and kaiako reported high level of engagement in professional learning and development (PLD). This included attending initial workshops, engaging in webinars and accessing online resources. The full impact of this engagement in PLD is yet to be seen and will be a focus for ERO in future evaluations.

The barriers and challenges in this evaluation largely reflect those reported previously, with the main barriers to implementation related to time and variable levels of kaiako understanding within a service. The findings also highlight other barriers that include PLD challenges, lack of leadership capability, changes to teaching teams, getting parents and whānau involved, and internal evaluation capability and capacity.

In the conclusion of this report we note:

ERO's findings give an early indication of some of the challenges for leaders and kaiako in engaging with *Te Whāriki*. They highlight the need for more in-depth engagement with *Te Whāriki* to increase understanding of the expectation to 'weave' a local curriculum based on 'what really matters' in their service for their children. Such engagement includes unpacking and working with the learning outcomes in ways that make visible children's progress and learning over time.

We ask: So how do we close the 'quality' gap? What will it take to reduce the variability of understanding and practice, both within early learning services, as well as between services?



FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at ero.govt.nz/publications

Next steps and recommendations

We recommend that leaders and kaiako in early learning services use the findings of this report as a catalyst to:

- » engage more deeply with *Te Whāriki* to build shared understandings of expectations associated with reviewing and designing their local curriculum
“What are our curriculum priorities? What really matters for the children in our service?”
- » unpack and discuss the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki* as part of their planning, assessment and evaluation processes
“What do these learning outcomes look like in terms of children’s progress and learning in our service?”

- » explore and discuss their understanding of, and commitment to support Māori children to experience success as Māori
“What do we know and understand about kaupapa Māori theory? What expertise do we have to increase our understanding of practices that enable Māori children to experience success as Māori?”
- » identify their next steps and priorities for PLD
“What are our next steps as we engage with Te Whāriki? What support do we need to take these steps?”

The following table provides a summary of the key findings that leaders and kaiako could use to help them to engage more deeply with some of the expectations in *Te Whāriki*.

ERO was interested in	What does <i>Te Whāriki</i> expect?	What did ERO find?	Questions to think about?
What you were doing to review and design your local curriculum.	<i>[That you] will use Te Whāriki as a basis for weaving its own local curriculum of valued learning taking into consideration also the aspirations and learning priorities of hāpu, iwi and community.</i> PAGE 7	Services were at a very early stage in terms of reviewing and designing their local curriculum. A barrier for many was that the concept of a ‘local curriculum’ was not well understood by leaders and kaiako or they had not considered that they needed to do this.	How do we use <i>Te Whāriki</i> as the basis for our local curriculum? What do we need to consider as we ‘weave’ our local curriculum? What are our curriculum priorities for children’s learning? What really matters for the children in our service?
How you were working with the 20 learning outcomes in <i>Te Whāriki</i> .	<i>[That you] will work with colleagues, children, parents and whānau to unpack the strands, goals and learning outcomes, interpreting these and setting priorities for their particular ECE setting.</i> PAGE 23	Variability in understanding about how to work with the learning outcomes in <i>Te Whāriki</i> as part of assessment, planning (including teaching strategies) and evaluation. Most services were at an early stage of working with the learning outcomes to identify the learning valued in their service.	How do we work with the 20 learning outcomes as part of our local curriculum and associated assessment and teaching practices? What do the 20 learning outcomes look like in terms of children’s progress and learning in our service? What do we know about children’s progress and developing capabilities in relation to the 20 learning outcomes?
How confident you are to support Māori children to experience educational success as Māori.	That leaders and kaiako will draw on Kaupapa Māori theory in supporting Māori children to achieve educational success as Māori. <i>Te Whāriki</i> states: <i>The implementation of kaupapa Māori theory emphasises practices that enable Māori to achieve educational success as Māori. At its core is the retention of Māori language and culture.</i> PAGE 61	In the services that were confident (or had already begun) leaders and kaiako were at an early stage in working with <i>Te Whāriki</i> to support Māori children to experience success as Māori and to realise their potential.	What do we know and understand about kaupapa Māori theory? What expertise do we have to help us increase our understanding of practices that enable Māori children to experience success as Māori?

ERO is continuing to evaluate the implementation of *Te Whāriki* with the next report focusing on preparedness to implement. This will be published in early 2019.