

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

Early Childhood Education: Inclusion of Children with Special Needs (December 2012)

The Ministry of Education's 'Success for All' policy expects all early childhood services to provide inclusive education and care for children with special needs.*

Inclusion is described as every child being valued as a unique individual and supported to be fully involved in all aspects of the curriculum.

In 2011, ERO evaluated how well early childhood services included children with special needs.

There were 268 early childhood services in this evaluation. More than one-third (104) had children enrolled with moderate to severe special needs. Nearly all of these services were 'very' or 'mostly' inclusive of children with special needs.

ERO found that services with inclusive processes and practices:

- believed that children with special needs are capable and confident learners
- provided additional support as appropriate
- worked collaboratively with parents and key professionals from other agencies.

In the 164 services that did not currently have children with moderate to severe special needs, most were well placed to enrol children with special needs.

** Children with special needs are children that need extra support because of a physical disability, a sensory impairment, a learning or communication delay, a social, emotional or behavioural difficulty or a combination of these.*

What does inclusive practice look like?

Knowing the child – very inclusive services know the child, their parents and whānau very well. Open and frequent communication takes place, which is supportive and non-judgemental.

Relationships – there are good relationships with children with special needs, between educators, parents and whānau and specialists, and with other children in the service.

Experiences and opportunities – children with special needs are included in all activities, allowing and supporting them to participate in all aspects of the programme.

Individual Programmes – effective individual programmes (IPs) for children with special needs are developed, implemented and reviewed collaboratively - by educators, parents and other key professionals.

Environment – the environment is welcoming and respectful. The physical environment caters for the abilities of all the children and resources are easily accessible.

Self review – effective self review focuses on the impact of practices and programmes on outcomes for children with special needs. This includes looking at the impact of transition practices on the inclusion of children with special needs.

Transitions – effective transitions take place and are a collaborative effort between services, parents and whānau, and professionals.

How inclusive is your service?

Self-review questions for services with children with special needs.

How well do transitions ensure the continuing wellbeing, learning, and development of children with moderate to severe special needs?

- **Knowing the child's strengths and needs**

*How do you let parents and whānau know about how your service includes children with special needs?
How do you work with parents, other agencies and educational institutions during transitions into, within and from your service?*

- **Relationships with the child**

*How do educators, other parents and children at your service get to know and understand the child?
What do you know about the other agencies that are involved with the child and their whānau?*

- **Environment**

Are your service's social and physical environments inclusive and welcoming?

- **Self review of transitions**

*Does self review of transitions investigate outcomes for the child and their whānau?
Who is involved?*

To what extent are children with moderate to severe special needs supported as confident and competent learners?

- **Access to the programme**

*How do you ensure there is equitable access to experiences and opportunities?
How do you decide the attendance hours of children with special needs?
How are excursions and other events inclusive of the child?*

- **Individual programme**

*Are the individual programmes for children developed collaboratively? Who is involved?
Do the individual programmes include assessment and outcomes? Do they link to Te Whāriki? Do you identify next steps for the child?*

- **Developing the programme**

*In what ways are parent partnerships well developed and appropriate?
How does your service access external support?
How are the aspirations of parents and whānau for their child supported?*

- **Implementing the programme**

*How does your service maximise the child's access to the programme?
How does it adapt the programme to support the child's learning and participation?
Do your educators have a good understanding of teaching strategies for the child? How are these implemented?
Do you work with education support workers (ESWs), other specialists, parents and whānau to implement teaching strategies for the child?*

- **Relationships with the child**

Does the child appear to have a sense of belonging, and good relationships with his/her peers? How are these supported?

- **Self review of support**

*Does self review of support investigate outcomes for the child and his/her whānau?
Who is involved?*

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