Indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most

September 2019

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

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Purpose of the indicators

Indicators are used at different levels of the education system for different purposes. The selection of an indicator depends on the purpose for which it is to be used.

At a national level, indicators provide a means to evaluate how well the system is performing in particular areas of policy interest. For example, participation and access to early childhood education (ensuring equitable access for all children to attend quality early childhood education with a focus on children up to the age of three). ERO’s national reports on education issues and effective practice contribute to evaluation at a system level.

Indicators that are used primarily for accountability purposes typically demand quantitative measures such as scores or ratings. On its own, quantitative data cannot reflect the complexity of an early childhood education service and its community and is unlikely to have much effect on service improvement.

When used for improvement purposes, indicators generally demand qualitative data. Using indicators effectively requires a deep understanding of change theory, iterative use of evidence, and the continuing development of evaluative capacity.¹

These indicators draw together research and evaluation evidence about effective practice in early childhood education contexts that promote valued learning outcomes for children from birth to school age (0-6) in Aotearoa New Zealand. They are designed to focus on the things that matter most in contributing to children developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions and working theories that support lifelong learning.

The indicators reflect the outcomes of, and conditions for, high quality early childhood education. Underpinned by the regulatory framework² the primary purpose of these indicators is to promote quality improvement.

Indicator development

These indicators for early childhood services are drawn from current national and international research and evaluation evidence.

In undertaking this review and update ERO has incorporated new research and good practice findings that have emerged since the indicators were last revised in 2011-2012. The indicators have been refined and reduced in number to focus on what matters most in the provision of high quality early childhood education in the unique context of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Selection of indicators: guiding principles

The following principles have guided the design of the framework and the selection of the indicators.

The indicators:

- focus on valued learning outcomes for all children as articulated in *Te Whāriki*
- foreground the relationships required to enact the *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*/ the Treaty of Waitangi
- focus on the conditions that are most likely to provide equitable opportunities to learn and promote children’s learning
- are underpinned by a research-based theory of improvement
- reflect the interconnectedness of the conditions required to promote and sustain continuous improvement and innovation
- describe what is observable or measurable
- signal the shift to an evaluation orientation that requires professional knowledge, expertise and engagement.

How the indicators are organised

The indicators in this document are designed to focus early childhood services and ERO evaluators on the things that matter most to promote equitable outcomes for all children.

There are two types of indicator: outcome and process.

The *outcome* indicators are the outcomes from *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early Childhood Curriculum*. The expectation is that leaders and kaikō will work with community to contextualise the learning outcomes associated with each of the curriculum strands in terms of their community values, and family/whānau aspirations for their children.

The *process* indicators describe practices, systems and processes that contribute to the provision of high quality early childhood education. They are organised in five key domains that work together to promote equitable learning opportunities and outcomes for all children.

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The indicators as a resource

The indicators are a resource that inform the judgements ERO evaluators make about the performance of early childhood services. They are also intended to assist services’ internal evaluation.

For ERO, the indicators:

- assist ERO evaluators to consider what is significant when making judgements about quality early childhood education
- focus on children having agency
- maintain an unrelenting focus on success for tamariki Māori, as Māori
- foreground Pacific peoples’ aspirations for their children’s learning, diverse learners and those needing additional support
- promote consistency and transparency by providing guidance for evaluators
- provide a basis for discussion with service personnel about what best supports the valued learning and outcomes for all children.

For early childhood services, the indicators:

- make the review process transparent
- help them to understand the basis on which ERO makes its judgements
- focus them on factors that contribute to children’s learning outcomes
- provide a tool to assist them with their own internal evaluation
- help to build their evaluation capacity.

For parents and whanau, the indicators:

- highlight what high quality provision looks like for their child
- help them to understand the practices that matter most for their children in an early childhood service context
- provide them with prompts for questions to ask when choosing a service for their child
- support them to engage in discussions and decisions about their child’s learning.

Where evaluation against the outcome indicators indicates poor performance, the process indicators can be used as a tool to investigate the conditions that contribute to this poor performance. Where evaluation against the outcome indicators indicates high quality/exemplary practice, the process indicators can be used as a tool to determine which of the processes and conditions have contributed to this.
Ngā Ara Whai Hua: Quality Framework for Evaluation and Improvement in Centre-based Early Childhood Services

Ngā Ara Whai Hua: Quality Framework for Evaluation and Improvement in Early Childhood Services shows how ERO is differentiating its approach to evaluating quality and performance in early childhood services (centre-based initially) and a basis for new ways of reporting ERO’s findings to its various audiences.
The Story of Poutama and Ngā Aka

The Māori concepts that underpin Ngā Ara Whai Hua and the indicators are part of our (Māori) narratives which are grounded in our traditions and stories.

The separation of Ranginui and Papatūānuku signalled many changes for their children, of which there were many. They were stunned by the possibilities and potential of their new existence. While different off-springs took responsibility for the development and establishment of their chosen domains, one of the siblings, Tanemāhuta or Tāwhaki (tribal differences) set out in search of knowledge. This knowledge was critical for those that were to be kaitiaki over certain domains. This knowledge would set in place the way in which everything would co-habitat and live in harmony with each other.

Tane knew that these were located within the realm of the almighty IO. He developed a plan to ascend through the 10 plains by way of a vine or aka. At each level he would stop, observe, scan and learn about the terrain and in particular possible challenges and conflicts he would encounter. From there he would strategise and plan different routes to get to the next plain. He encountered many barriers and blocks but was able to work his way around or through these. It was not an easy journey.

The poutama is used in many contexts to identify the journey of Tane to achieve knowledge and enlightenment. The vine or aka was the way in which he achieved his feat.

Definition of Poutama and Ngā Ara Whai Hua

The Poutama is a design usually found on a traditional Māori tukutuku panel (woven lattice). It has both spiritual and educational purposes. The Poutama is a metaphor that describes the way in which knowledge is pieced together to create a pathway to associated information and skills. Māori believe that all knowledge related to their history, values, beliefs and practices are linked to create a whole. Poutama signposts a journey to seek knowledge and enlightenment. The poutama identifies the pathway of trajectory which is depicted in the upward movement of the stairway.

The poutama is the metaphor or symbol for Ngā Ara Whai Hua: Quality Framework for Evaluation and Improvement in early childhood services. It identifies critical connectable links between each ara or pathway. They are not isolated, separate pieces of information. Each is needed to inform the other.

Ngā - plural, more than one
Ara - pathway, route, direction
Hua - significant, outcome, result
Akanuku: Reviewing for accountability purposes
Akarangi: External and internal evaluation for ongoing improvement
Akamatua: Striving for excellence
Domains: Ngā Akatoro are the multiple stems that lead off the main vine.

Indicators: Ngā Rāpupuku are the many leaves and sprouts that come off Ngā Akatoro and indicate the healthy nature of the entire vine.
Valued learning and outcomes for children

*Te Whāriki: He Whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early Childhood Curriculum* sets the curriculum framework and direction for children’s learning in early childhood services in Aotearoa.

*Te Whāriki* encapsulates outcomes in its vision statement that children are:

Competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society (*Te Whāriki* p. 5).

These aspirations are at the heart of ERO’s indicator framework. Realising these aspirations will mean that every child is:

- confident in their identity, language and culture as a citizen of Aotearoa New Zealand
- physically, emotionally and spiritually safe, healthy and well
- a successful lifelong learner who has knowledge, skills, and attitudes combined as dispositions and working theories that support lifelong learning
- a global citizen, adaptive, creative and resilient, confident to engage successfully in new settings and contribute to society.

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Outcome indicators

The learning outcomes are broad statements of valued learning. They are designed to inform curriculum planning and evaluation and to support the assessment of children’s progress (Te Whāriki p. 16).

Over time and with guidance and encouragement children become increasingly capable of:

Wellbeing – Mana atua
- keeping themselves healthy and caring for others/te oranga nui
- managing themselves and expressing their feelings and needs/te whakahua whakaaro
- keeping themselves and others safe from harm/te noho haumaru

Belonging- Mana whenua
- making connections between people, places and things in their world/te waihanga hononga
- taking part in caring for this place/te manaaki I te taiao
- understanding how things work here and adapting to change/te mārama kit e āhua o ngā whakahaere me te mōhio kit e panoni
- showing respect for kaupapa, rules and the rights of others/te mahi whakaute

Contribution – Mana tangata
- treating others fairly and including them in play/te ngākau makuru
- recognising and appreciating their own ability to learn/te rangatiratanga
- using a range of strategies and skills to play and learn with others/te ngā kau aroha

Communication – Mana reo
- using gesture and movement to express themselves/he kōrero ā-tinana
- understanding oral language and using it for a range of purposes/he kōrero ā-waha
- enjoying hearing stories and retelling and creating them/he kōrero paki
- recognising print symbols and concepts and using them with enjoyment, meaning and purpose/he kōrero tuhituhi
- recognising mathematical symbols and concepts and using them with enjoyment, meaning and purpose/he kōrero pāngarau
- expressing their feelings and ideas using a wide range of materials and modes/he kōrero auaha

Exploration Mana - Aotūroa
- playing imaging, inventing and experimenting/te whakaaro me te tūhurahura i te pūtaiao
- moving confidently and challenging themselves physically/te wero ā-tinana
- using a range of strategies for reasoning and problem solving/te hīraurau hopanga
- making sense of their worlds by generating and refining working theories/te rangahau me te Mātauranga
Process Indicators

The process indicators describe the conditions that contribute to high quality early childhood education necessary to realise the valued outcomes for all children.

1. **He Whāriki Motuhake: The learner and their learning**

   1.1 Children’s learning and development in play-based contexts is supported through caring, learning-focused partnerships.

   1.2 Children, parents, and whānau contribute to a curriculum that recognises their languages, identities and cultures.

   1.3 Children have equitable opportunities to learn through a responsive curriculum consistent with *Te Whāriki*.

   1.4 Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are valued and an integral part of teaching and learning.

   1.5 Children’s learning and development is supported through culturally responsive and intentional pedagogy.

   1.6 Assessment practices enhance children’s mana and identity as successful learners.

2. **Whakangungu Ngaio: Collaborative professional learning builds knowledge and capability**

   2.1 Children’s learning and development is supported by leaders and kaiako, and others with culturally relevant knowledge and expertise.

   2.2 Leaders and kaiako have the professional knowledge that enables them to implement a relevant, responsive and rich curriculum for all children.

   2.3 Children’s learning is enhanced through leaders and kaiako engaging in professional learning opportunities that contribute to ongoing and sustained improvement.

   2.4 Children’s learning is enhanced through leaders and kaiako working as a professional learning community.

3. **Ngā Aronga Whai Hua: Evaluation for improvement**

   3.1 Coherent organisational conditions enable managers, leaders and kaiako to do and use evaluation for improvement and innovation.

   3.2 Capability and collective capacity to do and use evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building sustains improvement and innovation.

   3.3 Engagement in deliberate, systematic internal evaluation processes and reasoning promotes valued outcomes for all children.

4. **Kaihautū: Leaders foster collaboration and improvement**

   4.1 Leaders collaboratively develop and enact the service’s philosophy, vision, goals and priorities, recognising *Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi* as foundational.

   4.2 Relational trust enables collaboration and sustained improvement.

   4.3 Leaders ensure access to opportunities for professional learning and development that builds capability.

   4.4 Effective planning, coordination and evaluation of curriculum, teaching and learning promotes equitable outcomes for all children.

   4.5 Leaders develop, implement and evaluate the organisational systems, processes and practices that promote ongoing improvement.

5. **Te Whakaruruhau: Stewardship through effective governance and management**

   5.1 The learning and wellbeing of children in the context of whānau relationships are the central factors in decision making.

   5.2 Children’s learning and development is supported through responsive partnerships, including networked relationships between services, agencies and the wider community.

   5.3 Outcomes for children and their whānau are promoted through effective systems, processes and internal evaluation.
1. He Whāriki Motuhake: The learner and their learning

Te Whāriki sets out the curriculum framework to be used in New Zealand early childhood education settings and provides guidance for its implementation. The concept of curriculum within Te Whāriki as “all the experiences, activities and events, both direct and indirect, that occurs within the early childhood education setting” is unique.5

The non-prescriptive framework of principles, interwoven strands and associated goals and outcomes enable services to work with Te Whāriki in ways that suit their contexts. The expectation is that kaiako6 will work with colleagues, children, parents and whānau to unpack the strands, goals and learning outcomes, interpret these and set priorities for their particular service. Te Whāriki explicitly calls for kaiako to work with community and interpret the specific learning outcomes associated with each of the curriculum strands so that they reflect the community’s values and family/whānau aspirations for their children.7

Te reo and tikanga Māori is integral to the service’s curriculum and associated teaching and learning practices. Leaders and kaiako promote te reo Māori as a living and relevant language for all children.

Kaiako who are intentional understand that children learn in different ways and the place of child-guided and adult-guided experiences. This includes both planned and spontaneous learning experiences. When kaiako are intentional in their practice, they draw on their up-to-date knowledge of how children learn, consider the service’s philosophy, and reflect this philosophical approach through practice and curriculum processes. Kaiako are knowledgeable about how children learn and develop. They effectively use assessment information and a wide range of teaching strategies to respond to the ways that children learn.8

Te Whāriki supports children to grow up strong in their identity, language and culture. It acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua and the educational aspirations of Māori and Pacific peoples. Key to providing culturally responsive curriculum for tamariki Māori are practices that are reflective of their cultural worldviews, identities, protocols and behavioural expectations.9 Implementing high quality infant and toddler pedagogy requires kaiako to acknowledge and be responsive to the cultural identities of all children, including Māori and Pacific infants and toddlers.10

The importance of language and culture and how this supports identities for Pacific children is a key consideration. Curriculum that is culturally located and informed by Pacific values, knowledge and practice is key to ensuring positive learning outcomes for children.11

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6 Kaiako includes all teachers, educators and other adults, including parents in parent-led services, who have responsibility for the care and education of children in an education and care setting.
10 Cooper, M. (2018). Commentary on ERO’s evaluation indicators for early learning services with a focus on infants and toddlers. Background paper prepared for the review of the ERO’s Evaluation Indicators for Early Childhood Education Services.
## 1. He Whāriki Motuhake: The learner and their learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process indicators</th>
<th>Examples of effective practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1.1** *Children’s learning and development in play-based contexts is supported through caring, learning-focused partnerships.* | Leaders and kaiako collaboratively develop and maintain responsive, reciprocal and respectful partnerships with:  
- children, parents and whānau  
- the wider community including schools and external agencies to improve and enhance children’s learning.  

Kaiako work in partnership with children, parents and whānau to support children’s developing social competence, emotional wellbeing and cultural connectedness in play-based contexts.  
Leaders and kaiako scaffold children’s identities as successful learners.  
Transitions into, within and from the service support and respond to each child, their parents and whānau. |
| **1.2** *Children, parents and whānau contribute to a curriculum that recognises their languages, identities and cultures.* | Leaders and kaiako purposefully seek all children’s and their parents’ and whānau views about strategies to respond to diverse languages, cultures and identities.  
Māori children and whānau have multiple, authentic opportunities to contribute to curriculum design and development that reflect Māori ways of knowing, being and doing.  
Kaiako integrate and reflect the languages and cultures of Māori and Pacific children throughout the curriculum.  
Leaders and kaiako seek ways to maintain children’s connections to, and fluency in their home language/s and cultural identities.  
Kaiako acknowledge, respect and respond to the identities, languages and cultures of children and their parents and whānau. |
| **1.3** *Children have equitable opportunities to learn through a responsive curriculum consistent with Te Whāriki.* | Leaders and kaiako implement inclusive practices that enable all children to participate fully in the curriculum alongside their peers.  
Leaders and kaiako:  
- identify and remove barriers to a child’s full acceptance, participation and learning  
- enable children to explore genders in ways that are non-stereotypical and open-ended  
- ensure that any planned early intervention is responsive to children’s identified needs.  
Children’s mana is recognised and fostered within a curriculum that supports them to:  
- take increased responsibility for the wellbeing of themselves, others, the group, and their immediate and wider environments |
- discuss and negotiate rights, fairness and justice with adults
- take responsibility, along with kaiako, parents and whānau, to address issues of sustainability and local/global citizenship as kaitiaki (guardians) of the land and environments.

Kaiako who work with infants and toddlers:
- ensure their approaches to care are culturally responsive
- utilise culturally relevant practices for Māori and Pacific children, for example, aroha, communal caregiving, tuakana-teina relationships, oriori and waiata
- maintain a calm, slow pace in which younger children have space and time to lead their learning
- are responsive to children’s verbal and non-verbal cues and signals.

Learning environments for children:
- are safe and well-resourced
- are equitable, inclusive and affirming
- encourage critical thought, wondering and creativity
- challenge children to explore and become fully involved in a wide variety of learning experiences.

Leaders and kaiako implement consistent routines that positively promote children’s:
- agency, independence and decision-making
- sense of security in being able to predict what will happen next.

### 1.4 Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are valued and an integral part of teaching and learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leaders and kaiako:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pronounce Māori words correctly and promote te reo Māori using a range of strategies based on relevant language learning theories</td>
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<tr>
<td>integrate te reo and tikanga Māori into day-to-day teaching practices.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 1.5 Children’s learning and development is supported through culturally responsive and intentional pedagogy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaiako thoughtfully and intentionally:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>give priority to oral language and recognise oral language as an integral part of identity development and learning across a range of domains</td>
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<tr>
<td>use a range of strategies to encourage children to express and explore their working theories, problem-solving and experimentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>make links across time, place and activities by revisiting children’s experiences, ideas and interests</td>
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<tr>
<td>recognise and extend children’s understanding of mathematical and literacy concepts in a variety of contexts including relevant cultural considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>provide opportunities for children to learn about the local and wider community.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Kaiako practice reflects the competencies in Tātaiko\(^{12}\) and in Tapasā.\(^{13}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.6</th>
<th><strong>Assessment practices enhance children’s mana and identity as successful learners.</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The valued learning outcomes in <em>Te Whāriki</em> are the basis for assessment for learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment for learning practices actively involve children and parents and whānau and include their perspectives and aspirations.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment builds the cultural identity, sense of belonging and identity as a learner of all children over time.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Effective assessment practice informs intentional planning, responsive curriculum and pedagogy.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leaders and kaiako gather and analyse multiple sources of data about children’s learning and development, progress over time and its implications for teaching and learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders and kaiako use fit-for-purpose assessment in order to:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• make children’s learning visible</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• identify progress and continuity of learning over time</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• identify children’s capabilities and where additional support may be needed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• support successful transitions at each phase of children’s learning pathway</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• provide children with feedback that acknowledges their learning, recognises their efforts, challenges and successes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• evaluate how well their local curriculum is helping to them to achieve their priorities for children’s learning and use this information to adapt practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment practice ensures information documented about children’s learning reflects the cultural contexts in which they live and includes culturally valued knowledges, skills, attitudes and behaviours.</td>
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</tbody>
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2. Whakangungu Ngaio: Collaborative professional learning builds knowledge and capability

Children’s experiences are informed by relevant, culturally located, contemporary knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The provision of high quality early childhood education is dependent on kaiako having the professional knowledge and expertise to respond to diverse cultures and contexts. At the heart of all professional learning is the responsibility kaiako have to promote the valued learning encompassed in Te Whāriki for children.

Critical for ongoing professional knowledge development for kaiako is the understanding of which or whose knowledge is being privileged.14 Differences exist between Māori and non-Māori perceptions of rights to knowledge. For non-Māori, attitudes to knowledge hold that individuals have inherent rights to knowledge. For Māori, knowledge is perceived as taonga passed down from ancestors, to be treated with respect.15

*Our Code Our Standards- Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession*16 sets out the expectations for professional and ethical practice. While the code and standards apply to those who are qualified and registered, all kaiako and leaders have a moral imperative and social obligation to uphold the ethics of the profession.

A core function of leadership is building professional capability and collective capacity.17 Kaiako inquiry and collaboration is encouraged by leaders who promote, support and participate in ongoing professional learning and development, so that all children can experience success as lifelong learners.18

Effective professional learning involves leaders and kaiako collectively developing and demonstrating shared understandings of curriculum, pedagogy and practice. Teaching and learning is multi-faceted, dynamic and requires kaiako to draw on a range of knowledges including curriculum, subject content knowledge and of children as learners.19

Access to professional learning opportunities enables leaders and kaiako to build knowledge and expertise as members of a collaborative professional learning community.20 Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is critical to determining the impact of professional learning on improving kaiako practice and promoting children’s learning and development. Opportunities to embed new learning in practice contributes to sustained improvement over time.

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## 2. Whakangungu Ngaio: Collaborative professional learning builds knowledge and capability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process indicators</th>
<th>Examples of effective practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **2.1** *Children’s learning is supported by leaders and kaiako, and others with culturally relevant knowledge and expertise.* | **Leaders and kaiako:**  
- demonstrate cultural competence and expertise to provide a rich, responsive and inclusive curriculum for all children  
- demonstrate a commitment to practices that promote success for Māori children such as fostering tuakana-teina relationships or groupings  
- learn about Māori theories and pedagogies to assist them to develop a culturally responsive curriculum  
- acknowledge Māori as tangata whenua and understand what the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi mean for their practice  
- value and celebrate Pacific and diverse groups of children and their parents and whānau for who they are and what they bring to the service. |
| **2.2** *Leaders and kaiako have the professional knowledge that enables them to implement a relevant, responsive and rich curriculum for all children.* | **Leaders and kaiako** have professional knowledge, including subject and content knowledge, to respond meaningfully to children’s interests and enquiries and build on their existing understandings, working theories and dispositions.  
Leaders and kaiako work together with children, parents and whānau to design, implement and evaluate a local curriculum informed by current theories of learning, teaching and development and their priorities for children’s learning.  
Leaders and kaiako can explain how the service’s local curriculum is consistent with the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*.  
Leaders and kaiako can explain the rationale and process of reviewing and designing their local curriculum which includes, for example, the history, protocols and legends of the local area.  
Leaders and kaiako demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of assessment in relation to promoting holistic learning and development for all children.  
Practices demonstrate an understanding of the importance of care as integral to the curriculum, particularly for infants and toddlers. |
| **2.3** *Children’s learning is enhanced through leaders and kaiako engaging in professional learning opportunities that contribute to ongoing and sustained improvement.* | **Leaders and kaiako:**  
- take personal responsibility for their own professional learning  
- gather, analyse and use evidence of children’s learning and outcomes to improve individual and collective practice  
- actively engage in critical reflection, problem solving and collaborative practice  
- participate in ongoing investigation, exploration and evaluation of teaching practice. |
2.4  
*Children’s learning is enhanced through leaders and kaiako working as a professional learning community.*

Leaders and kaiako have access to professional learning opportunities that:

- integrate theory and practice
- engage, and if necessary, challenge their beliefs and practices
- encourage them to individually and collectively take responsibility for their own professional learning and improvement
- deepen their understanding of the curriculum and of pedagogical and assessment practices
- use evidence of children’s progress and learning for collective inquiry into the effectiveness and impact of teaching practice
- develop professional knowledge and expertise using context-specific approaches informed by research
- provide multiple contexts in which to learn and apply new knowledge and discuss with others.

Leaders and kaiako identify and investigate aspects of their practice, set goals and develop evidence-based solutions, asking themselves what works (practical insight) and why (theory).

Leaders and kaiako seek opportunities to share their professional knowledge, expertise and practice in their wider professional community.
3. Ngā Aronga Whai Hua: Evaluation for improvement

Evaluation, including inquiry, supports the development of new knowledge and understandings about what works well and what makes the biggest difference to support valued learning outcomes for all children. Effective internal evaluation is always driven by the motivation to improve.\(^{21}\)

Evaluation involves making a judgment about the quality, effectiveness and value of policies, programmes and practices in terms of their contribution to desired outcomes. It is deeply influenced by a service’s values, aspirations and perceptions of what matters most for children and their learning. The processes used need to appropriately observe tikanga Māori. Effective and culturally appropriate evaluation activities are those that foster meaningful and honest engagement with Māori.

Evaluation is undertaken to assess what is and is not working, and for whom, and then to decide what changes are needed. Effective evaluation involves systematically asking good questions, gathering evidence, then making sense of the information: “what is and is not working and for whom?” Through this process, evaluation highlights the implications for equity and provides a basis for determining actions for improvement.

Inquiry is an integral part of the evaluation process. It involves identifying an aspect of practice to examine further, asking the right questions, and then seeking evidence and information to be able to better understand the issues involved and respond effectively.

When internal evaluation is done well, processes are coherent, and align with a service’s vision and goals and associated planning. All those involved in the service work collaboratively to ensure that the efforts that have gone into an evaluation lead to ongoing improvement.\(^{22}\)

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### 3. Ngā Aronga Whai Hua: Evaluation for improvement

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<tr>
<th>Evaluation indicators</th>
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| **3.1 Coherent organisational conditions enable governance, managers, leaders and kaiako to do and use evaluation for ongoing improvement and innovation.** | Evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building are embedded in the policies, systems and processes and practices that collectively express how the service plans for, and takes action to realise its vision, values, goals and priorities for children’s learning.  
Appropriate tools and methods are used to gather, store and retrieve a range of valid and reliable data.  
Those in governance, managers, leaders and kaiako recognise the importance of child, parent, whānau and community voice, and draw on this information to understand priorities for improvement.  
Relational trust at every level supports collaboration and risk taking, and openness to change and improvement.  
Sufficient resources are allocated to support change and improvement (for example, time, expertise, staffing).  
Effective communication supports the sharing and dissemination of new knowledge within the service and in the wider education community. |
| **3.2 Capability and collective capacity to do and use evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building sustains improvement and innovation.** | Opportunities for professional learning, mentoring and coaching develop knowledge, skills and confidence in evaluation and inquiry.  
Relevant internal and/or external expertise is carefully selected and used to build capability and collective capacity in evaluation and inquiry.  
Leaders, kaiako and those in governance or management roles are data literate. They:  
- pose focused questions  
- use relevant data  
- clarify purpose(s)  
- recognise sound and unsound evidence  
- engage in thoughtful interpretation and evidence-informed conversations.  
Research evidence about how to promote valued learning for all children is used to generate solutions, make decisions and implement strategies.  
Participation in evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building activities contributes to changes in thinking and behaviour and builds inquiry habits of mind. |
### 3.3 Engagement in deliberate, systematic internal evaluation processes and reasoning promotes equitable outcomes for all children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance, management, leaders and kaiako collaborate to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• investigate and scrutinise practice through evaluative reasoning and posing well considered and relevant questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• gather a wide range of relevant and authentic data in order to identify priorities and actions for improvement, and engage in meaningful decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>• monitor implementation of improvement actions and evaluate their impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>• generate timely information about progress towards goals and the impact of actions taken.</td>
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Internal evaluation processes enable managers, leaders, kaiako, parents, whānau and the wider community to better understand:

- how individual children and groups of children are progressing in relation to the valued outcomes of *Te Whāriki*.
- how improvement actions taken have impacted on outcomes and what difference is being made
- what needs to be changed and what further action needs to be taken
- the patterns and trends in outcomes over time
- what makes the most difference for children and in what contexts
- the extent to which the improvements contribute to realising the service’s vision, values, strategic direction, goals and priorities for learning.

Purposeful engagement with external evaluation is used as an opportunity to review, validate and support the service’s/organisation’s improvement actions.
4. Kaihautū: Leaders foster collaboration and improvement

Effective leadership and teamwork positively impact on outcomes for children. Effective leaders have a deep understanding of early childhood research and best practice about how young children learn. They set clear direction; support and guide others; build effective learning partnerships; and lead internal evaluation.

The Teaching Council has developed a Leadership Strategy Framework that defines leadership as follows:

**Educational leadership is the practice of supporting others to make a positive difference to children’s and young people’s learning. It involves creating and sustaining the conditions known to enhance their learning. It requires the capability to work effectively with colleagues and other adults to support learning and to create new solutions and knowledge together. For those in positional leadership roles it also involves building and sustaining thriving teams and institutions that support ongoing professional learning.**

The Education Leadership Capability Framework highlights the importance of leaders building and sustaining high trust relationships and collective leadership and professional communities.

Another useful definition of leadership in the early childhood education context comes from the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* developed by the College of Early Childhood Educators in Ontario, Canada. It states:

**Leadership is the practice of engaging with colleagues to draw on collective knowledge and experiences to solve problems, create solutions and improve outcomes. Leadership involves taking and encouraging collective responsibility, contributing to an inclusive and collaborative working environment and creating, coordinating and directing change through vision, inspiration, commitment and contribution (Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2017).**

Leadership is essential to:

- enact the service’s philosophy, and realise the service’s vision and strategic direction
- establish relational trust for collaboration and ongoing improvement
- promote children’s learning and equitable outcomes
- build and support professional practice
- ensure the effective operation of a service promotes valued learning and outcomes for children.

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26 Infants and Toddlers: Competent and confident communicators and explorers (2015).
29 Literacy in Early Childhood Services: Teaching and Learning (2011).
Leadership is the exercise of influence, whether based on positional authority, personal characteristics, or quality of ideas.\textsuperscript{28} It is about influence with purpose, based on relationships and empowerment, sharing a reciprocal process and supporting others to pursue changes that make a positive difference to children’s learning.\textsuperscript{29} The notion of leadership is a complex and developing dimension in early childhood education theory and practice.\textsuperscript{30} Many leadership discourses originate from business models and hierarchical structures of leadership. These have provided useful understandings of effective management and administration. While there is the continuing notion that leadership within early childhood is under-theorised and under-conceptualised, the research base is expanding.\textsuperscript{31}

Distributed leadership is the prevalent model of leadership in early childhood education.\textsuperscript{32} Distributed leadership is about sharing a vision, collaboration, shifting the balance of power, negotiating, mutual engagement and ongoing learning.\textsuperscript{33} Some services have approaches to leadership relevant to the cultural values and philosophies of their context, including a collaborative approach to leadership.\textsuperscript{34} While appointed leaders may have positional authority, leadership roles and responsibilities are open to everyone, including parents, whānau and children.\textsuperscript{35} Therefore, this dimension interprets leadership in its broadest sense and is not limited to those with formal leadership positions.

Pedagogical leadership is a key determinant of effective practice and what happens for children.\textsuperscript{36} Central to pedagogical leadership is the task of improving teaching and learning.\textsuperscript{37} Effective pedagogical leaders know and use the strengths of the individual kaiako in their teams in leading learning.\textsuperscript{38} Building a cohesive team with a shared understanding and a shared direction for the service is an important focus.

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\textsuperscript{29} See [https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Leadership_Strategy.pdf](https://educationcouncil.org.nz/sites/default/files/Leadership_Strategy.pdf)


Leaders who use their pedagogical and subject expertise to guide curriculum implementation and practice can promote improvements in the quality of education and care children experience. Leaders who promote, support and participate in ongoing professional learning and development, and encourage kaiako inquiry and collaboration, are better placed to provide leadership for curriculum, so all children can experience success.

Effective leadership plays a vital role in leading learning and is crucial to improving quality. Ongoing professional learning and development is essential to improving and growing culturally and professionally relevant leadership that promotes collective responsibility for enhancing practice in early childhood education.

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### 4. Kaihautū: Leaders foster collaboration and improvement

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<tr>
<th>Process indicators</th>
<th>Examples of effective practice</th>
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| 4.1 Leaders collaboratively develop and enact the service’s philosophy, vision, goals and priorities, recognising Te Tiriti o Waitangi/ the Treaty of Waitangi as foundational. | Leaders:  
- advocate for and with children, their parents and whānau to ensure the rights of all children to high quality and inclusive education and care  
- actively seek the perspectives and cultural expertise of parents and whānau and include these in the service’s philosophy, vision, goals and priorities for learning  
- create opportunities for whānau Māori to voice their views and listen and respond to these  
- allocate resources aligned to the service’s philosophy, vision, goals and priorities to promote children’s valued learning. |
| 4.2 Relational trust enables collaboration and sustained improvement. | Leaders:  
- establish and promote the organisational conditions that support debate, negotiation, problem solving, and critical reflection on practice  
- model and expect professional accountability and collective responsibility for the wellbeing and learning of all children in the service  
- engage in effective inter-professional work with others who support the health, wellbeing and learning of children and their whānau. |
| 4.3 Leaders ensure access to opportunities for professional learning and development that builds capability. | Leaders ensure access to high quality professional learning and development opportunities that respond to identified needs.  
Leaders identify and develop internal expertise, with the support of external expertise as appropriate, to ensure that improvement goals are met.  
Leaders mentor and coach kaiako to develop their teaching and leadership capability.  
Leaders and kaiako seek and use evidence about the effectiveness of professional learning processes in improving professional practice and children’s outcomes. |
| 4.4 Effective planning, coordination and evaluation of curriculum, teaching and learning promotes learning and equitable outcomes for all children. | Leaders:  
- promote a shared understanding of the service’s philosophy, vision, goals and priorities for children’s learning  
- provide opportunities for kaiako to build their knowledge and understanding of Te Whāriki and what it means for curriculum, teaching and learning in their service  
- drive ongoing inquiry into the responsiveness and effectiveness of teaching practices  
- model effective practice related to planning, coordination and evaluation of curriculum, teaching and learning  
- evaluate the effectiveness of the service’s curriculum processes and practices in promoting learning and achieving equitable outcomes. |
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<th>4.5 Leaders develop, implement and evaluate the organisational systems, processes and practices that promote continuous improvement.</th>
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| Leaders ensure that policies and practices promote all children’s identity, language and culture, wellbeing and learning. Leaders develop, implement and evaluate efficient and equitable management processes. Leaders implement and use systems for evaluating the effectiveness of actions taken to:  
  - provide rich curriculum and intentional teaching  
  - achieve equitable outcomes for all children  
  - enable all children and their whānau to participate in high quality early childhood education. |
5. Te Whakaruruhau: Stewardship through effective governance and management

A wide range of early childhood education services with diverse ownership and governance structures have emerged in response to specific social and cultural contexts, parent, whānau and community values, educational aims and employment patterns. These include different philosophies and operating models.

Specific legal responsibilities are associated with the governance and management of early childhood services. The Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Services 2008 and the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 form the regulatory framework. The governance and management role for early childhood services encompasses both accountability and improvement functions.

Although evidence relating to the effectiveness of governance within early childhood is limited, recent studies within the school sector suggest that an improvement-oriented governance (stewardship) role is most likely to promote enhanced learning outcomes.

An ongoing process of review and evaluation provides opportunities for governance and management to scrutinise all aspects of operations by asking the key question: “Are we doing the right thing here?” This scrutiny should focus on the service’s priorities for children’s learning, transparent sharing of information and ongoing evaluation of performance in relation to the vision and goals: “what difference will this make for children, and how will we know?”

Governance members exercise agency in their role, drawing on their networks and expertise to strengthen service capacity and effectiveness.

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42 See https://education.govt.nz/early-childhood/licensing-and-regulations/the-regulatory-framework-for-ece/
44 Agency is defined as ‘the energy level of proactivity, drive and commitment to governing’ (James, 2010, cited in Wylie, 2014, ibid. p.6).
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<th>Process indicators</th>
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| 5.1 The learning and wellbeing of children in the context of whānau relationships are the central factors in decision making. | Those responsible for governance and management:  
- enact the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi through partnerships, policies and practices  
- actively pursue and find ways to ensure equity and social justice for all children and their whānau  
- ensure that parent and whānau aspirations for their children influence and actively contribute to the service’s/organisations’s vision, philosophy and associated goals and plans for their children’s learning and wellbeing. |
| 5.2 Children’s learning and development is supported through responsive partnerships within a network of relationships between services, agencies and the wider community. | Māori are acknowledged as tangata whenua and Te Tiriti of Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi principles are valued, implemented and strengthened through partnerships, policies and practices.  
Those responsible for governance and management:  
- facilitate collaboration between the service/organisation and relevant agencies and community organisations to support broader educational outcomes  
- support initiatives that contribute to positive social and community outcomes. |
| 5.3 Outcomes for children and their whānau are promoted through effective systems, processes and internal evaluation. | Those responsible for governance and management regularly monitor, evaluate and report how well the service/organisation is meeting its regulatory and professional requirements for curriculum, health and safety, premises, human resources, finance and administration.  
Those responsible for governance and management develop, monitor and evaluate the implementation of policies and procedures to ensure they:  
- are current, coherent, fit for purpose and effectively guide practice  
- enact Te Tiriti of Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi principles and acknowledge Māori as tangata whenua  
- guide inclusive practice at all levels of the service  
- set out explicit expectations for kaikaho to implement a bicultural curriculum  
- provide physically and emotionally safe environments for all children and adults  
- are based on principles of advocacy, equity and social justice  
- reflect the rights of all children to a quality, inclusive early childhood education.  
Those responsible for governance and management allocate resources in transparent ways that clearly align with the service’s philosophy, vision and goals for promoting valued learning outcomes (drawn from Te Whāriki). |
Human resource policies, procedures and practices ensure:

- recruitment, selection and retention of well-qualified leaders and kaiako
- induction is systematic and focused on the development of adaptive expertise
- professional learning and development builds the capability of leaders and kaiako
- coherent performance management processes contribute to the service achieving its vision and goals.

A positive working environment facilitates low turnover of kaiako and is conducive to building and sustaining high quality adult: child relationships.

Policies and procedures prioritise:

- children’s sense of security and kaiako continuity
- kaiako having the time to develop positive relationships with each child, their parents and whānau
- structural aspects of quality including qualifications, space, group size and premises to ensure high quality provision.

Those in governance and management roles are well supported through induction and professional learning that relates to the knowledge and skills required to maintain and sustain a strong focus on equity and excellence for all children.