

# 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 – [www.ero.govt.nz](http://www.ero.govt.nz)

## Building genuine learning partnerships with parents: Teaching approaches and strategies that work

This ERO report is part of a series of reports about teaching strategies that work. In Term 4, 2016, ERO visited 40 primary schools across New Zealand. These schools were selected because of increased numbers of children achieving at or above the expected standards as they moved through the upper primary years (Years 5 to 8).

This report shares strategies and approaches from schools that have contributed to improving achievement by developing genuine learning partnerships with parents. It also includes simple strategies a few of the schools used to involve parents more in supporting the things children were learning in school.

### What did ERO find?

Most schools have built good relationships with parents but had not fully developed genuine learning partnerships. All schools reported to parents and had interviews or three-way conferences and other communication with parents. However, not all had fully given prominence to the culturally responsive concepts of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and mahi tahi.

### Genuine learning partnerships

Some schools had seen considerable benefits for children from developing genuine and reciprocal learning partnerships with parents and whānau.

These schools had been quite deliberate in their approaches. Teachers and leaders in these schools:

- introduced new practices as part of a *Teaching as Inquiry* project
- introduced improvements as part of their involvement in [Accelerating Literacy Learning \(ALL\)](#) and [Accelerating Learning in Mathematics \(ALiM\)](#)
- examined research as trialled new practices in parts of the school before extending practices more widely
- worked closely with parents when they introduced new teaching approaches and strategies
- shared the intended benefits for children with parents and reviewed how new processes were working for them.

A key component of these genuine partnerships was the regular and honest sharing of all achievement and progress information teachers had collected. Teachers and parents looked at actual assessments together and discussed the strengths and possible reasons for any visible progress or confusions for a child.

In schools where successful learning partnerships with parents are found solely in Years 1 to 2, these should be extended across the school to help address the achievement slump seen for many children in Years 5 to 8.

### FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at [www.ero.govt.nz/publications](http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications)

## Differentiated approaches to working with parents

Some schools differentiated the extent of the relationship with parents depending on the strengths and needs of the child. Leaders in these schools recognised educationally powerful connections and relationships between teachers, leaders, parents and whānau as components of an effective response to underachievement.

Teachers in these schools:

- worked closely with parents of children who needed to accelerate their progress
- valued what the parent could do to help
- listened to what the parent might suggest and acted on these suggestions
- valued the time spent on the partnership as it generally resulted in greater progress for the child and less need for additional instruction for the child in the classroom.

These partnerships resulted in consistent language, strategies and goals that children, their teachers and parents/whānau understood and used.

All parents ERO spoke with who were involved in learning partnerships valued the opportunity to be fully engaged in their child's learning, especially when their child had identified learning needs. In the most successful schools, every parent was involved and contributing to their child's learning. Parents expressed gratitude for the time teachers and leaders had taken to work with them to support their child and accelerate their progress.

Parents know their child's interests and concerns and can help teachers understand more about what helps their child succeed. Teachers were amazed by the amount of progress that occurred when parents knew



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the strategies they should focus on at home. Teachers also recognised how a child's self-esteem increased when both teachers and parents understood and responded to the child's strengths, goals and interests.

## Finding ways to involve parents in their child's learning

Many of the schools featured in this report were in low socio-economic communities where a high proportion of parents were fully involved in their child's learning. Leaders and teachers in these schools avoided making negative assumptions about parents' willingness to contribute to their child's progress. Leaders and teachers in these schools:

- built strong and ongoing learning relationships with parents and whānau
- fully and honestly shared assessment information about the child
- listened to parents' ideas about how they could help and what support they needed
- provided details about the language, strategies and approaches the child used at school
- provided materials and internet links for parents that needed them
- regularly communicated with parents to share and hear what was working and what they all should do next.

## ERO reports used in this publication

### 2016

[Partners in learning \(2016\)](#)

### 2015

[Educationally powerful connections with parents and whānau \(2016\)](#)

[Continuity of learning: Transitions from early childhood services to schools \(2016\)](#)

[Raising student achievement through targeted actions \(2015\)](#)

### 2010

[Promoting success for Māori students schools' progress \(2010\)](#)