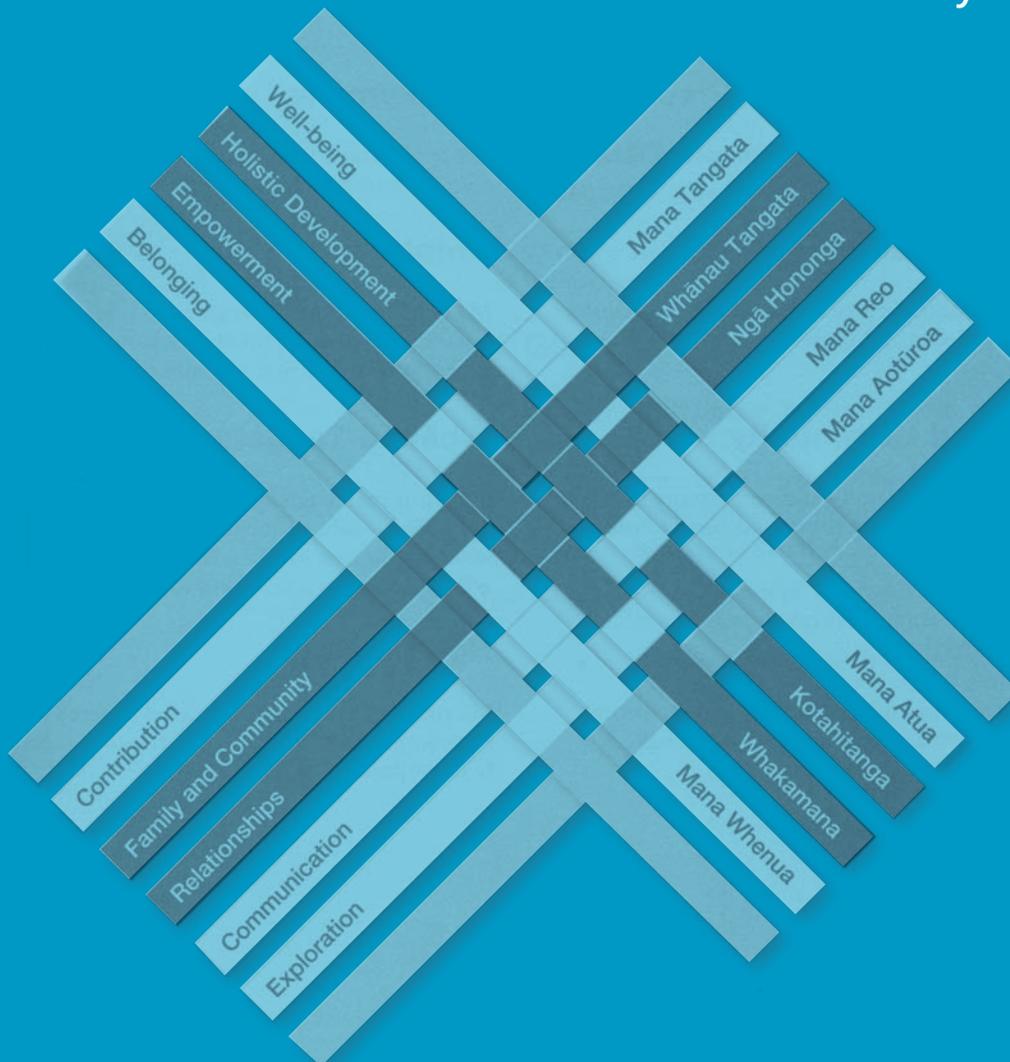


Working with *Te Whāriki*

May 2013



Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa

The Child – the Heart of the Matter



Cover diagram, Te Whāriki, courtesy of the Ministry of Education

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We welcome your comments and suggestions on the issues raised in these reports.



Foreword

The Education Review Office (ERO) is an independent government department that reviews the performance of New Zealand's schools and early childhood services, and reports publicly on what it finds.

The whakataukī of ERO demonstrates the importance we place on the educational achievement of our children and young people:

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

In our daily work we have the privilege of going into early childhood services and schools, giving us a current picture of what is happening throughout the country. We collate and analyse this information so that it can be used to benefit the education sector and, therefore, the children in our education system. ERO's reports contribute sound information for work undertaken to support the Government's policies.

In 2011, the Early Childhood Education Taskforce report, *An Agenda for Amazing Children*, recommended an evaluation of the implementation of the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. This is one of two ERO national evaluation reports undertaken to inform any future review of the early childhood curriculum. This particular report focuses on how services are working with *Te Whāriki* and highlights the different ways teachers are using the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki* to inform their practice.

Successful delivery in education relies on many people and organisations across the community working together for the benefit of children and young people. We trust the information in ERO's evaluations will help them in their work.

Diana Anderson
Chief Review Officer (Acting)
Education Review Office

May 2013

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Overview

In 2011, the ECE (early childhood education) Taskforce report, *An Agenda for Amazing Children*,¹ recommended an evaluation of the implementation of the early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki*.² In response, ERO conducted a national evaluation that investigated:

How effectively are early childhood services across New Zealand determining, enacting and reviewing their curriculum priorities to support education success for every learner?

Findings from this national evaluation are published in two reports. This report, *Working with Te Whāriki*, highlights the different ways services are working with the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, and discusses the emerging themes and challenges associated with implementing this curriculum 17 years on from its publication. It complements a companion report, *Priorities for Children's Learning in Early Childhood Services* (May 2013).

In this study, ERO found that most (80 percent) of the 627 early childhood services reviewed in Terms 1, 2 and 3, 2012, were making some use of the prescribed curriculum framework³ of principles and strands in *Te Whāriki*. In these services the principles and/or strands were most evident in their philosophy statement and in planning and/or assessment processes. A few services (10 percent) were working in-depth with *Te Whāriki*, exploring the underpinning theories and using it as a basis for evaluating their curriculum. The remaining services (10 percent) were making limited use of *Te Whāriki*. For these services *Te Whāriki* was not well understood and less visible in documentation and practice.

For many services, *Te Whāriki* was seen as a 'given' and leaders and teachers referred to it as 'everything we do' and 'who we are'. Most services had linked their statement of philosophy to one or more of the principles and/or strands. The notion of *Te Whāriki* as a philosophical curriculum was widely held, particularly with regard to the principles. Services were comfortable with the framework of principles and strands and saw it as accommodating their particular approach and associated practices.

Although services are required to implement the prescribed curriculum framework of principles and strands from *Te Whāriki*, some services were quite selective in the way they did this. These services chose to focus on one or two of the four principles, most commonly *relationships* and *family and community*, and on one or two of the five strands, most commonly *wellbeing* and *belonging*. The principles and strands were often referenced in documents as a way of services showing that they were working with

- 1 www.taskforce.ece.govt.
- 2 MOE (1996) *Te Whāriki, He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- 3 See Appendix 4 for information about the prescribed curriculum framework.

them, but practice was often far removed from the intent. In a few services, their broad interpretation of the principles and/or strands accommodated inappropriate practice such as highly teacher-directed activities and/or routine-focused programmes.

The extent to which particular educational philosophies, theories or approaches⁴ were integrated with *Te Whāriki* and embedded in practice varied considerably across the early childhood services in this evaluation. While some services based their curriculum solely on the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*, others used *Te Whāriki* as a basis for integrating other philosophies and/or approaches with varying degrees of success.

The findings of this evaluation highlight some concerns about how *Te Whāriki* is being implemented in early childhood services. These relate to the broad nature of the framework of principles and strands and how this accommodates a wide range of practice, including poor quality practice. The findings also suggest that for most services *Te Whāriki* is not used to reflect on, evaluate or improve practice. On a broader level, the findings raise questions about the purpose and nature of curriculum in early childhood education. In this report ERO has looked at how services were enacting their curriculum priorities and emphases and the place of the prescribed curriculum framework of principles and strands in that process.

As already noted, most services (80 percent) were implementing a curriculum that linked in some way to the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*. However, *Te Whāriki* as a curriculum document, along with the prescribed framework of principles and strands and the regulated Curriculum Standard, does not provide the sector with clear standards of practice for high quality curriculum implementation. Hence this report highlights the ways services were working with *Te Whāriki*, rather than evaluating the effectiveness of its implementation.

This report poses challenges for policy makers and the early childhood education sector. These include:

- the longevity of curriculum and at what point a curriculum should be reviewed or revised.
- whether there is sufficient coherence and alignment between the prescribed curriculum framework (currently the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*), and the regulated Curriculum Standard and associated criteria.
- the implications of having a non-prescriptive curriculum that is reliant on the professional knowledge of those who implement it.

The conclusion section of this report discusses these concerns and challenges in the context of ERO's findings and in relation to research and critique about *Te Whāriki* in recent years.

⁴ See Appendix 5 for a list of educational theories and philosophical approaches which ERO identified services were using.

Next steps

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education considers the findings of this report to:

- inform decision-making about a formal review of *Te Whāriki*
- strengthen the alignment between the prescribed curriculum framework and the regulated Curriculum Standard and associated criteria
- identify areas where additional guidance and support is needed to assist early childhood services to design and implement a curriculum that is consistent with *Te Whāriki* and responsive to all children at their service.

ERO recommends that early childhood services use the findings of this report to discuss and evaluate the extent to which they are implementing *Te Whāriki*.

Introduction

BACKGROUND

The early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, has its development embedded in the post education reform period of the early 1990s. Its development spanned a period from 1991 to 1996. Extensive consultation with diverse groups in the early childhood education (ECE) sector led to a draft document, *Te Whāriki: Draft guidelines for developmentally appropriate programmes in early childhood services*⁵ being published in 1993. The final curriculum document, *Te Whāriki, He Whāriki Mātauranga mo ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa*, was published in 1996.⁶

Te Whāriki describes the curriculum as:

“the sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development.” (p.10)

It has an overarching aspiration for children:

“To grow up as 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.” (p.9)

The concept of the curriculum as a whāriki recognises the diversity of the early childhood education sector in New Zealand. This diversity includes the different programmes, philosophies, structures, and environments that contribute to each service’s curriculum priorities and emphases.

The curriculum seeks to encompass and celebrate this diversity as well as to define common principles, strands, and goals for children’s learning and development within which the different organisations and services are able to operate (p.17).

Te Whāriki (p.11) describes each service’s curriculum as distinctive and dependent on a number of influences, including:

- cultural perspectives
- structural differences
- organisational differences
- different environments
- philosophical emphases

5 MOE (1993) *Te Whāriki: Draft guidelines for developmentally appropriate programmes in early childhood services*. Wellington: Learning Media Limited.

6 MOE (1996) *Te Whāriki, He Whāriki Mātauranga mo ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa*. Wellington: Learning Media Limited.

- different resources dependent on setting
- local community participation
- age range of children.

A strong emphasis is placed on each service's curriculum being responsive to the development and changing capabilities of the children at the service.

Regulations framework 2008⁷

The regulatory framework for early childhood services was reviewed in the mid 2000s and new regulations promulgated in 2008. The 2008 regulations gave the Minister of Education the ability to prescribe a national curriculum framework for early childhood education. The principles/ngā kaupapa whakahaere and strands/ngā taumata whakahirahira of *Te Whāriki* were gazetted in September 2008 to come into force from 1 December 2008. Early childhood services are required to meet the Curriculum Standard⁸ as part of their licensing requirements and this is assessed using a set of criteria developed as part of the 2008 regulatory framework.

The Curriculum Standard requires all licensed services to implement a curriculum that is consistent with this framework. However, they have considerable flexibility in how they do this as noted in the guidance the Ministry of Education provides for services:

*The ways in which each early childhood education service works with the curriculum framework will vary. Each service will continue to develop its own curriculum and programmes that reflect the things that are important to the children, their families, the staff, the community and the philosophy of the specific setting. It is important for services to be able to identify how everything we do in an early childhood setting works towards meeting the curriculum framework for the children and families that attend.*⁹

CONTEXT FOR THE FINDINGS

Two recent reports, the ECE Taskforce report¹⁰ and a policy profile report¹¹ by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), endorse the widely accepted strengths of *Te Whāriki*, whilst acknowledging that it is timely to take a closer look at its implementation.

In 2011, the ECE Taskforce report, *An Agenda for Amazing Children*, recommended that an evaluation of the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, be undertaken as part of recommendations to improve accountability.

- 7 www.lead.ece.govt.nz >> management information >> information about ECE regulations >> 2008 regulatory framework
- 8 www.lead.ece.govt.nz >> licensing criteria for services >> centre based ECE services >> curriculum
- 9 www.lead.ece.govt.nz >> licensing criteria for services >> centre based ECE services >> curriculum >> professional practice >> C1 curriculum consistent >> guidance
- 10 www.taskforce.ece.govt.nz/ reference-downloads/
- 11 Taguma, M., Litjens, I. & Makowiecki, K. (2012) *Quality Matters in Early Childhood Education and Care: New Zealand*. Available from www.oecd.org/newzealand

The report noted that:

Te Whāriki is considered a model of best practice, nationally and internationally, but could benefit from a comprehensive review of its implementation. We recommend that this takes place as soon as possible. A review would show whether the curriculum is being implemented, the areas that are working well, barriers to implementation, and whether further resources or support are needed. (p.106)

We have found nothing to detract from the widely-held national and international view that Te Whāriki is a profoundly important document that is fit for purpose and meets our society's needs as well as the needs of a diverse early childhood education sector. We do, however, believe that its implementation, which began in 1996, should be reviewed in order for strengths and weaknesses to be identified and learned from. (p.112)

The 2012 policy profile report *Quality Matters in Early Childhood Education and Care: New Zealand* by the OECD focused on the theme “designing and implementing curriculum and standards”. The report noted that “*New Zealand's Te Whāriki is a progressive and cogent document regarding the orientation and aims of ECE*”.

The report identified 'potential areas of reflection'. These included:

- improving and specifying parental engagement in curriculum development and implementation
- addressing children's agency more explicitly
- strengthening the communication and leadership skills of staff.

Findings

WORKING WITH *TE WHĀRIKI*: AS PART OF EACH SERVICE'S CURRICULUM

ERO was interested in the links between the prescribed framework of principles and strands (*Te Whāriki*) and each service's curriculum. An analysis of the data showed the ways in which services were using the prescribed framework of principles and strands and highlighted where services were working beyond this framework and engaging with the full curriculum document. It also showed where services were working in a very limited way with the principles and strands.

ERO found that most (80 percent) of the 627 early childhood services reviewed in Terms 1, 2 and 3, 2012 were making some use of the prescribed framework of principles and strands. In these services the principles and/or strands were most evident in their philosophy statement and in planning and/or assessment processes. ERO noted the highly variable understanding of *Te Whāriki* and associated practice across these services. Although many services expressed their intent to work with *Te Whāriki* in various documents, this intent was not always reflected in practice. A common finding across these services was the limited reflection, or more formal self review in relation to their implementation of *Te Whāriki*.

Ten percent of the services were working more in-depth with *Te Whāriki*, beyond the prescribed curriculum framework of principles and strands. Some of these services were exploring the underpinning theories and using it as a basis for evaluating their curriculum. Many explicitly linked their curriculum to the four principles and the five strands and associated goals. The strands and goals were included in children's assessment records and often unpacked further into learning dispositions and outcomes. Self review included a focus on evaluating practice against the principles, and/or strands and goals. In some of these services, teachers used *Te Whāriki* to develop indicators for review, for example to review bicultural practice. Some also used the reflective questions in *Te Whāriki* to reflect on, and evaluate, their teaching practice.

The remaining services (10 percent) were making limited use of *Te Whāriki*. In these services, leaders and teachers had a limited understanding of the principles and strands. This lack of understanding often resulted in superficial references to *Te Whāriki*, or a focus on only one or two of the principles and strands. Reference to *Te Whāriki* was sometimes visible in wall displays but not reflected in practice. In some, *Te Whāriki* was used to justify poor quality teaching practices such as highly teacher-directed activities or limited opportunities for child-initiated interactions.

An analysis of the data did not show any significant statistical differences in terms of service type, location, ownership arrangement and qualifications/registration levels.¹²

WORKING WITH *TE WHĀRIKI*: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

An analysis of the data gathered from 627 early childhood services highlighted six themes that describe how services were using *Te Whāriki* as:

- a philosophical curriculum
- an implicit curriculum
- a selective curriculum
- a reference point for curriculum
- a basis for a bicultural curriculum
- a basis for evaluating their curriculum.

The findings in relation to these are discussed below. An introductory statement from *Te Whāriki* provides a context for each theme. ERO's findings are discussed and questions for discussion and consideration are included with each 'theme'.

***Te Whāriki*: the philosophical curriculum**

What does *Te Whāriki* say about this?

The early childhood curriculum has been envisaged as a whāriki, or mat, woven from the principles, strands, and goals defined in this document. The whāriki concept recognises the diversity of early childhood education in New Zealand. Different programmes, philosophies, structures, and environments will contribute to the distinctive patterns of the whāriki. (p.11)

What did ERO find?

In many services, the principles and/or strands of *Te Whāriki* were most evident in their statement of philosophy. Philosophy statements often used wording from *Te Whāriki* in relation to the principles, strands or aspirational intent. Teachers referred to the principles as being embedded in or woven into their philosophy. Many services gave emphasis through their philosophy to the principles of *family and community and relationships*.

In a few services, the only reference to *Te Whāriki* was in their philosophy statement, particularly in the services where there was limited use of *Te Whāriki*. Including aspects of *Te Whāriki* as part of their philosophy statements meant that services could justify their practice as being underpinned by all or some of the principles and strands. In some services, using *Te Whāriki* in this way provided a strong rationale for their curriculum.

¹² Differences in ratings between the types of services were checked for statistical significance using a KruskalWallis H test, as were the differences between location, and teacher qualifications and registration. Differences between ownership arrangements were tested using a Mann Whitney U test. The level of statistical significance for all statistical tests in this report was $p < 0.05$.

However in others it was nothing more than words on paper as the actual practice bore no resemblance to the service's stated values and beliefs.

ERO's review highlighted the lack of alignment in many services between *Te Whāriki* as a philosophical curriculum and what actually happens in practice. Implementing *Te Whāriki* as a philosophical curriculum has some benefits for early childhood services in that it clearly establishes the values and beliefs that underpin their curriculum. The risk, however, is that the enacted curriculum does not reflect or align to the more specific intent of *Te Whāriki* in terms of the practices associated with the principles, strands, goals and outcomes.

Some questions for early childhood services to consider

- To what extent is *Te Whāriki* referenced in our statement of philosophy?
- Which aspects are included?
- Why were these aspects included?
- What do we know about how well our philosophy is enacted in practice?

Te Whāriki: the implicit curriculum

What does *Te Whāriki* say about this?

Te Whāriki defines curriculum as the sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster learning and development.(p.10)

What did ERO find?

For many services *Te Whāriki* was seen as a 'given' and leaders and teachers referred to it as 'everything we do' and 'who we are'. This sense of an 'implicit' curriculum may well be due to the fact that it has been part of the early childhood education sector for 20 years. It may also be because of the way in which many services were working with *Te Whāriki* as a curriculum that was inherent to their practice and strongly linked to their philosophical values and beliefs.

Where services were working with *Te Whāriki* as an implicit curriculum, there was not always a shared understanding of the implications for practice amongst teachers. The principles and/or strands of *Te Whāriki* were often more explicit in assessment information and in displays in the physical environment than in planning and teaching practices. Most services were comfortable with the framework of principles and strands and saw it as accommodating their particular approach and associated practices.

For many early childhood services it seems to be acceptable to work with *Te Whāriki* as an implicit curriculum. The intent of *Te Whāriki* in this regard is not clear. The broad framework of principles and strands accommodates a diverse approach to curriculum in individual services that may, in fact, lead services to work with this framework in a more implicit way.

Some questions for early childhood services to consider

- How explicit is *Te Whāriki* in our service's curriculum?
- Which aspects are implicit and which are explicit?

Te Whāriki: the selective curriculum

What does *Te Whāriki* say about this?

The strands and goals arise from the principles and are woven around these principles in patterns that reflect the diversity of each early childhood education service. Together, the principles, strands, goals, and learning outcomes set the framework for the curriculum whāriki (p.39).

What did ERO find?

The open, non-prescriptive framework of principles, interwoven strands, associated goals and outcomes enables services to work with *Te Whāriki* in ways that suit their particular context. Some services used this framework as a menu from which to choose the aspects they wanted to focus on. For example, the principles *family and community* and *relationships* were often the only ones highlighted in documentation such as planning or assessment records. Similarly *wellbeing* and *belonging* were the most often referred to strands. Some services justified this as their current focus or emphasis, indicating that other principles and strands would also have a focus at a different time. However this was not the case in all services.

ERO noted a distinct absence of some principles and strands in the planned and enacted curriculum of some services, particularly in relation to the principles *empowerment* and *holistic development*, and the strands *exploration*, *communication* and *contribution*.

Many services were also selective about how they used the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*. In some, the principles and/or strands were only visible in assessment information, where links were made between what was written about a child's involvement in an activity and a particular principle or strand. In others, *Te Whāriki* was integrated into all aspects of the service's planning, assessment and evaluation or self-review processes.

The extent to which services were including the goals and outcomes associated with the strands was highly variable. Where the goals were being used, this was mainly in planning for groups and individuals. Less evident was any use of the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki*. These outcomes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) are listed for each of the strands in *Te Whāriki*.

Working with *Te Whāriki* as a selective curriculum means that the curriculum experienced by children may not necessarily reflect or include all of the principles and strands. Although *Te Whāriki* suggests that each service develop its own emphases and priorities (p.44), it also expects that services weave their whāriki from the principles, strands and goals (p.11) thus providing a rich and responsive curriculum for all children.

Some questions for early childhood services to consider

- To what extent is our service's curriculum based on all of the aspects of *Te Whāriki*?
- What aspects of *Te Whāriki* are included? For example, principles, strands, goals and outcomes?
- Does our service give greater emphasis to some aspects of *Te Whāriki* than others? Why?
- What might this mean for children's learning?

Te Whāriki: a reference point for curriculum

What does *Te Whāriki* say about this?

Each early childhood education setting should plan its programme to facilitate achievement of the goals of each strand in the curriculum. There are many ways in which each early childhood service can weave the particular pattern that makes its programme different and distinctive (p.28).

Each programme should be planned to offer sufficient learning experiences for the children to ensure that the curriculum goals are realised (p.28).

What did ERO find?

In many services, *Te Whāriki* was evident in the environment in visual displays such as charts showing how the principles and strands were linked to teaching practices and assessment information. Photographs were often annotated to show links between children's learning and the strands of *Te Whāriki*.

Some services viewed implementation as using the language of *Te Whāriki*. This was particularly evident in documentation and in conversations about *Te Whāriki* and how it was being implemented. Often *Te Whāriki* was referenced in documents but not so visible in practice. Such referencing was more of a means for these services to prove they

were working with the principles and strands, although practice was often far removed from the intent. In a few services, their broad interpretation of the principles and/or strands was used to justify poor quality or inappropriate practice such as highly teacher-directed activities and routine-focused programmes.

The strands of *Te Whāriki* were often used as a reference point in assessment records. In some services, the strands were referenced in the front of an individual child's profile book or learning portfolio with no other mention of them. In others, teachers linked narrative assessments quite explicitly to the strands. In a few services, assessment information was referenced to the goals and/or learning outcomes associated with the strands. However, as noted in the previous section about services using *Te Whāriki* as a selective curriculum, in most of the services there was little evidence of reference to goals and indicative learning outcomes in assessment, planning and evaluation processes.

The idea of working with *Te Whāriki* as a reference document makes some sense but just referencing the principles and strands in planning and assessment documentation does not mean that services are implementing *Te Whāriki*. Services need to challenge themselves to explore the thinking and practice behind the words by engaging more deeply with *Te Whāriki*.

Some questions for early childhood services to consider

- How is *Te Whāriki* visible in our service's curriculum?
- Which aspects are visible?
- Are we just using the language of *Te Whāriki* or do we have a deeper understanding of what the principles and strands mean for curriculum in our service?

Te Whāriki as a basis for a bicultural curriculum

What does *Te Whāriki* say about this?

This is the first bicultural curriculum statement developed in New Zealand. It contains curriculum specifically for Māori immersion services in early childhood education and establishes, throughout the document as a whole, the bicultural nature of curriculum for all early childhood services. (p.7)

This is a curriculum for early childhood care and education in New Zealand. In early childhood education settings, all children should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The curriculum reflects this partnership in text and structure. (p.9)

What did ERO find?

Many services made reference to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to New Zealand's dual cultural heritage and bicultural practice in their philosophy statements. However, only a few services were fully realising such intent in practice by working in partnership with whānau Māori and through the provision of a curriculum that was responsive to the language, culture and identity of Māori children. Often bicultural practice meant the use of basic te reo, some waiata in the programme, resources such as puzzles that depicted aspects of te ao Māori and posters and photographs that reflected aspects of Māori culture. Events such as Matariki were part of the regular celebrations in some services.

The principle *relationships* underpinned bicultural practice in some services, particularly in terms of how they worked collaboratively with parents and whānau. In a few, partnerships were strengthened through a focus on seeking and responding to the aspirations parents and whānau have for their children.

Less common features of practice included services:

- focusing on bicultural practice as part of their self review
- increasing teacher capability to implement a bicultural curriculum through involvement in professional learning programmes
- increasing their awareness and use of *Ka Hikitia*¹³ and *Tātaiako*.¹⁴

ERO's findings suggest that *Te Whāriki* is not well understood and implemented as a bicultural curriculum. Although the intent of *Te Whāriki* is recognised in some services there is not sufficient guidance to help services realise this intent.

Some questions for early childhood services to consider

- What informs and guides our bicultural curriculum?
- How do *Te Whāriki*, *Ka Hikitia* and *Tātaiako* inform our bicultural practice?
- What do we know about the impact of our bicultural curriculum for Māori children?
For all children in our service?

Te Whāriki as a basis for evaluating the service's curriculum

What does *Te Whāriki* say about this?

The purpose of evaluation is to make informed judgments about the quality and effectiveness of the programme. A system of evaluation will ask: In what ways do the human relationships and the programme provide a learning environment which is based on the goals of the curriculum? (p.29)

Questioning and reflecting on practice are first steps towards planning and evaluating the programme. They encourage adults working with children

13 MOE (2009) *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: The Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012, updated 2009*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

14 MOE (2011) *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

to debate what they are doing and why they are doing it and lead to establishing an information base for continued planning and evaluation of the curriculum (p.45).

What did ERO find?

Very few services were using *Te Whāriki* as a basis to evaluate their curriculum. The 'questions for reflection' included in *Te Whāriki* in relation to each goal were used by some of these services as a basis for discussion and a more formal review of their curriculum. Others developed indicators for each of the principles and used these as signposts of good practice in their reviews. Although some services were undertaking self review that focused on aspects of curriculum, *Te Whāriki* was not used well to inform such review.

Most early childhood services are not making good use of the breadth of information in *Te Whāriki* to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their curriculum. This may be because they are not engaging with the curriculum beyond the prescribed framework of principles and strand or it may be because they do not understand *Te Whāriki* well enough to work with all aspects of the curriculum. Implementing a curriculum that reflects “*the things that are important to the children, their families, the staff, the community and the philosophy of the specific setting*”¹⁵ requires services to undertake ongoing review to evaluate how well they are doing this.

Some questions for early childhood services to consider

- What framework(s) do we use to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of our service’s curriculum?
- What aspects of *Te Whāriki* might help us to undertake such evaluation?

OTHER INFLUENCES ON INDIVIDUAL SERVICE’S CURRICULUM

Early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand has been influenced by different philosophical and educational approaches. In some services, *Te Whāriki* provides the only philosophical basis for their curriculum. In others *Te Whāriki* is a foundation upon which other philosophical and educational approaches are added.

Te Whāriki acknowledges that “different programmes, philosophies, structures and environments will contribute to the distinctive patterns of the whāriki”. It notes that philosophical emphases such as in Playcentre, Montessori or Rudolf Steiner programmes will contribute to these distinctive patterns. More recently, the influence of other theories/philosophies and approaches¹⁶ have found their way into the curriculum of individual early childhood services.

15 www.lead.ece.govt.nz >> licensing criteria for services >> centre based ECE services >> curriculum >> professional practice >> C1 curriculum consistent >> guidance

16 See Appendix 5 for a list of the different philosophical and education approaches which ERO identified services using in this evaluation.

ERO gathered and analysed information about the influence of educational philosophies, theories and approaches on each service's curriculum. Some influences were very specific to service type, for example those adopted in playcentres. Others were particular to services that had historically been part of the early childhood education sector such as Montessori and Steiner. It was quite common to find services catering for children up to two years of age adopting aspects of the educational theories of Emmi Pikler or Magda Gerber. Some services took a very eclectic approach, often claiming to be implementing a curriculum based on several different theories or approaches, but without always having a good understanding of the underpinning theories of these or being able to integrate them with *Te Whāriki*.

The extent to which particular educational philosophies, theories or approaches were integrated with *Te Whāriki* and embedded in practice varied considerably across the early childhood services in this evaluation. In many, ERO identified some level of integration with the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*. Some based their curriculum solely on the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*, while others used *Te Whāriki* as a basis for including other philosophies and/or approaches to varying degrees of success.

Services that were working more deeply with *Te Whāriki*, took an integrated approach to their curriculum. They strengthened their curriculum by weaving together the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki* and their particular philosophy or theoretical approach rather than adopting practices as an alternative to *Te Whāriki*. In these services, there was more of a shared understanding amongst teachers of the underpinning philosophies, theories or approaches adopted.

Discussion

This evaluation report presents ERO's findings about the ways in which early childhood services are working with *Te Whāriki*. As noted by Alvestad, Duncan and Berge (2009), implementation of national curricula is a complex task raising many questions. This evaluation report raises important questions about the implementation of *Te Whāriki* in New Zealand's diverse range of early childhood services.

What is the purpose of a curriculum: the documented, mandated and practised?

The findings raise questions about what working with *Te Whāriki* actually means. The definition of curriculum as the 'sum total of children's experiences with people, places and things' looks at curriculum from the learner's experiences of that curriculum. The prescribed curriculum framework of principles and strands sets very broad parameters for what those experiences might be. Nuttall (2002) notes that a definition of curriculum as 'everything the learner experiences' is very difficult to put into practice. Nuttall (2002) asks:

How do early childhood teachers interpret and enact Te Whāriki's definition of curriculum? On what basis do they think, decide and act in the design and implementation of curriculum experiences? And what is the role of Te Whāriki in this process? (p.92)

Te Whāriki (the document) highlights the place of the goals in helping to "identify how the principles and strands can be incorporated into programmes at a practical level" (p.44). However, the absence of the goals in the prescribed framework may have inadvertently weakened the link between the principles and strands and what they mean for children's learning. This is an area for further investigation and discussion.

Is the framework of principles and strands in *Te Whāriki* too broad?

The non-prescriptive and open nature of *Te Whāriki* has been referred to as both its strength and its weakness (Cullen, 1996; Nuttall, 2002; Dalli, 2011). ERO acknowledges these strengths and weaknesses in this report. On the one hand *Te Whāriki* enables services to adopt many different philosophical and pedagogical approaches to curriculum within the broad framework of principles and strands. On the other, it is evident that *Te Whāriki* can accommodate considerable variability in quality. In some services *Te Whāriki* was used to justify quite inappropriate, poor quality practice. Cullen (1996) and Te One (2003) highlight the risk that *Te Whāriki* could be used to affirm

and justify current practice rather than being a curriculum to transform practice. Te One (2003) noted that “many teachers found it difficult to implement *Te Whāriki* in a way that was not just confirmation of existing practice”. Ten years on, the findings in this report confirm that this is still the case in some early childhood services.

Has *Te Whāriki* become too familiar?

ERO’s findings suggest that many leaders and teachers have become comfortable with *Te Whāriki* as a curriculum framework. Smith (2011) notes that familiarity with *Te Whāriki* can become an issue where this leads to complacency or a degree of comfort where there is no challenge. She notes that this familiarity may result in its use being quite narrow and limited. The findings in this report indicate that most services are comfortable with the prescribed framework of principles and strands while the document itself has become less familiar.

Does *Te Whāriki* offer sufficient stretch and challenge?

A consequence of this comfort with the principles and strands is that there is a sense that *Te Whāriki* no longer provides stretch or challenge for many services. It may be that the issue lies with the broad nature of the prescribed framework or it may be that leaders and teachers do not have the theoretical and pedagogical knowledge to effectively implement this framework. Smith (2011) notes:

Rather than producing recipes for what to do, Te Whāriki makes bigger demands on teachers and challenges them to apply theoretical knowledge to their practice. Effective implementation of Te Whāriki demands interpretation, reflection, dialogue, careful planning, observation and consultation with parents/whānau and children (p.151).

It may also be that additional guidance is needed for services to support the implementation of *Te Whāriki*. Hedges and Cullen (2005) question the broad definition of curriculum in *Te Whāriki* noting that it potentially lacks guidance for teachers with regard to content, with its emphasis on learning processes and orientations rather than knowledge outcomes and bicultural content. According to Smith (2011) “one of the main criticisms of *Te Whāriki* has been its lack of attention to subject-based knowledge”. Hedges (2008) also notes that the learning outcomes described as dispositions and working theories in *Te Whāriki* have not been fully explored. ERO’s findings highlight the need for further guidance and support for services to explore more deeply the strands and associated goals, dispositions and outcomes in *Te Whāriki*.

Is *Te Whāriki* useful in guiding the implementation of a bicultural curriculum?

The variability in how services were implementing *Te Whāriki* as a bicultural curriculum raises the question about the extent to which *Te Whāriki* provides useful guidance.

Ritchie (2003) notes that implementation of *Te Whāriki*:

...is subject to the extent to which a largely Pākehā early childhood teaching force are able to deliver on expectations that require a level of expertise that is beyond their experience as monocultural speakers of English with little experience of Māori culture and values (p.10).

ERO's reports *Success for Māori Children in Early Childhood Services* (May, 2010)¹⁷ and *Partnership with Whānau Māori in Early Childhood Services* (February, 2012)¹⁸ both highlight the challenges for early childhood services in working in partnership with whānau to provide a curriculum that is responsive to their aspirations for their children. Both reports made recommendations to the Ministry of Education to provide professional development support in these areas.

The findings of this evaluation also suggest that there are some misunderstandings about the nature of a bicultural curriculum and the difference between providing a bicultural curriculum for all children and supporting Māori children to experience success as Māori. This is an area for further investigation.

17 ERO (2010) *Success for Māori Children in Early Childhood Services*. Wellington: Education Review Office.

18 ERO (2012) *Partnership with Whānau Māori in Early Childhood Services*. Wellington: Education Review Office.

Conclusion

This report poses some challenges for policy makers and the early childhood education sector. One of these challenges is about **longevity of curriculum** and at what point a curriculum should be reviewed or revised. There has been some discussion and debate about this in the sector with various views expressed about the need for a review of *Te Whāriki*.

The ECE Taskforce report indicated that the issue lay with implementation and not with *Te Whāriki* itself. The findings of this evaluation indicate that the issue may well lie with how services are working with the prescribed curriculum framework of principles and strands. Many services are not going beyond this framework in terms of working with the goals, dispositions and learning outcomes that are in the curriculum document. A review or refresh of *Te Whāriki* could provide an opportunity for the sector to engage in useful discussion about the purpose of curriculum and the nature of the framework and guidance needed to achieve this purpose.

Another challenge relates to whether there is **sufficient coherence and alignment** between the prescribed curriculum framework (currently the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*), and the regulated Curriculum Standard and associated criteria. The Curriculum Standard requires services to “*plan, implement, and evaluate a curriculum that is designed to enhance children’s learning and development through the provision of learning experiences, and that is consistent with any curriculum framework prescribed by the Minister that applies to the service.*” The remaining wording of the standard describes the additional practices that must be reflected in the curriculum, and the criteria against which a service is assessed for licensing purposes. A stronger link between these aspects could provide more clarity for services about the requirements and lead to more effective implementation of the prescribed curriculum framework.

A final challenge is about having a **non-prescriptive curriculum** mandated through the prescribed framework of principles and strands that is reliant on the professional knowledge of those who implement it. This evaluation, and other national reports ERO has recently published,¹⁹ signal the need for considering the provision of guidance and support to early childhood services to enable them to work with the full intent of *Te Whāriki* as part of their curriculum design and implementation.

19 ERO (2010) *Success for Māori Children in Early Childhood Services*. Wellington: Education Review Office.
 ERO (2011) *Literacy in Early Childhood Services: Teaching and Learning*. Wellington: Education Review Office.

NEXT STEPS

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education considers the findings of this report to:

- inform decision-making about a formal review of *Te Whāriki*
- strengthen the alignment between the prescribed curriculum framework and the regulated Curriculum Standard and associated criteria
- identify areas where additional guidance and support is needed to assist early childhood services to design and implement a curriculum that is consistent with *Te Whāriki* and responsive to all children at their service.

ERO recommends that early childhood services use the findings of this report to discuss and evaluate the extent to which they are implementing *Te Whāriki*.

Appendix 1: Methodology

ERO'S EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The data for this evaluation report was drawn from information gathered about “curriculum priorities and emphases in early childhood services” in Terms 1, 2 and 3, 2012. Information was gathered from 627 services. ERO asked specifically about:

- the links between early childhood services’ curriculum priorities and emphases, their curriculum and the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki*
- the other influences on each service’s curriculum.

See the companion ERO report *Priorities for Children's Learning in Early Childhood Services (May 2013)* for further information about the broader evaluation framework.

DATA COLLECTION

During each service’s review, ERO collected information from a variety of sources including:

- discussions with managers and teachers at the service
- informal discussions with parents and whānau
- documentation related to the operation of the service and the learning of children.

All data was collected by ERO review officers in the normal course of their review activities.

The term *teacher* as used in this report refers to teacher, educator and kaiako.

Appendix 2: Sample of services

Data for this evaluation was gathered from 627 services reviewed in Terms 1, 2 and 3, 2012. Table 1 shows the types of services in the overall sample.

Table 1: Service types for overall sample

Service type	Number	Percentage of sample	National percentage ²⁰
Casual education and care	4	1	0.5
Hospital-based service	8	1	0.5
Home-based network	27	4	9
Playcentre	67	11	12
Kindergarten	171	27	17
Education and care	350	56	61
Total	627	100	100

The sample is representative of national figures. While kindergartens are over-represented, and home-based networks and education and care services are under-represented, these differences are not statistically significant.²¹

²⁰ The national percentage of each service type is based on the total population of services as at August 2012. For this study, it excludes kōhanga reo.

²¹ The differences between observed and expected values were tested using a Chi square test. The level of statistical significance for all statistical tests in this report was $p < 0.05$.

Appendix 3: References

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Appendix 4: Prescribed Curriculum Framework

Clauses 1-5 of the Gazette Notice published in September 2008 signalling the requirement to implement the Early Childhood Education Framework are set out below.

Education (Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework) Notice 2008²²

Pursuant to section 314 of the Education Act 1989 (as amended by the Education Amendment Act 2006), the Minister of Education gives the following notice:

Notice

- 1 Title and commencement –
 - (1) This notice may be cited as the Education (Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework) Notice 2008.
 - (2) This notice shall come into force on 1 December 2008.
- 2 Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework (‘Curriculum Framework’) as set out in clause 6 of this notice is the Curriculum Framework prescribed for all licensed early childhood education and care services and certificated playgroups in accordance with section 314 of the Education Act 1989.
- 3 Every service provider for a licensed early childhood education and care service or certificated playgroup must implement the Curriculum Framework in accordance with the requirements (if any) prescribed in regulations made under Part 26 of the Education Act 1989.
- 4 Licensed early childhood education and care services and certificated playgroups must implement the Principles and the Strands, and can opt to use either the English or the te reo Māori versions set out in Part A or Part B of clause 6, or both. Kōhanga reo affiliated with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust must implement Part C of clause 6.
- 5 The purpose of the Curriculum Framework is to provide the basis and context underpinning specific curriculum regulatory requirements in the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 or the Education (Playgroups) Regulations 2008 relating to the standards of education and care and to the associated curriculum criteria.
- 6 The wording for Clause 6 (the full wording of the Curriculum Framework) can be read at: <http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/RegulatoryFrameworkForECEServices/EarlyChildhoodEducationCurriculumFrameworkForAotearoaNewZealand.aspx>

22 www.lead.ece.govt.nz >> management information >> information about ECE regulations >> ECE curriculum framework

Appendix 5: Philosophies and educational approaches evident in services in this evaluation

Attachment theory	<p>Attachment theory describes the dynamics of long-term relationships between humans. It grew out of British psychiatrist and psychoanalyst John Bowlby's work with homeless and orphaned children immediately after World War II. Attachment theory's most important tenet is that an infant needs to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver for social and emotional development to occur normally.</p> <p>In the 1960s and 1970s, developmental psychologist Mary Ainsworth reinforced Bowlby's basic concepts, introduced the "secure base" and developed a theory of three attachment patterns in infants: secure attachment, avoidant attachment and anxious attachment. For further information see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attachment_theory - cite_note-Bretherton-4</p>
Bronfenbrenner	<p>Urie Bronfenbrenner was a Russian American psychologist whose theories impacted on education of disadvantaged and marginalised sections of society. His "Ecological Systems Theory" holds that development is influenced by five environmental systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsystem: The individual's immediate surroundings, including their family, peers, school, and neighbourhood. This is where the most direct interactions with social agents take place. • Mesosystem: Relations or connections between the different microsystems or contexts, eg. between family and school, or school and church experiences. • Exosystem: The connection between the individual's immediate context and a social setting in which they have no active role. For example, a wife's or child's experience at home may be influenced by the husband's experiences at work. • Macrosystem: The culture in which individuals live. Cultural contexts include socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity. • Chronosystem: The patterning of environmental events and transitions over an individual's life (eg. divorce), as well as socio historical circumstances (eg. the increasing opportunities for women to pursue a career). <p>For further information see: http://www.enotes.com/soc/q-and-a/can-use-some-help-starting-this-paper-175243</p>

<p>Christian</p>	<p>Most Christian early childhood services in New Zealand belong to the Christian Early Childhood Education Association of Aotearoa, Inc. (CECEAA). This interdenominational association was established in 1992 to provide advice and support for early childhood services and teachers with a Christian world-view. The CECEAA's Mission Statement is</p> <p><i>“to see, throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand, quality, well-resourced early childhood education services with well-supported professional teachers and management who reflect Christ-like characteristics throughout their communities of learning.”</i></p> <p>For further information, see the CECEAA's website, http://www.ceceaa.org.nz</p>
<p>Enviroschools</p>	<p>The Enviroschools Programme includes all types of early childhood centres and schools. It is designed to help them create sustainable communities by role modelling sustainable environmental practices, enabling students to be teachers amongst their families and peers, and creating future leaders who understand how to make informed decisions and take action. Programmes are participatory, locally relevant and responsive to change. They can evolve to meet the needs of children and young people, their schools and their communities.</p> <p>For further information see: www.enviroschools.org.nz/</p>
<p>Fa'a Samoa</p>	<p>Fa'a Samoa literally translates as “The Samoan Way”, and refers to the socio-political and cultural way of life for Samoan people. Fa'a Samoa has three key elements to it – the matai (chiefs), aiga (extended family) and the church. Sosaiete Aoga Amata Samoa I Aotearoa (SAASIA) was founded in 1987 to promote the use of Samoan culture and language with Christian beliefs in aoga amata. Further information is available from the SAASIA's website www.saasia.org.nz/</p>
<p>Forest Kindergarten</p>	<p>A forest kindergarten is a type of kindergarten in which educators and children spend their time almost exclusively outdoors, typically in a forest. In all but the most extreme weather, children are encouraged to play, explore and learn in a natural environment, and the adults' role is to assist rather than lead. Children in forest kindergartens play with toys that are fashioned from objects found in nature, rather than with commercial toys.²³ For further information see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_kindergarten</p>

23 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_kindergarten

Froebel	<p>Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel created the 'kindergarten' concept, and coined this word for the Play and Activity Institute for young children that he founded (together with Wilhelm Middendorf and Heinrich Langethal) at Bad Blankenburg, Germany in 1837. He also designed educational play materials known as Froebel Gifts, or <i>Fröbelgaben</i>, which included geometric building blocks and pattern activity blocks. Froebel recognised the importance of the child's activity in learning. He introduced the concept of "free work" (<i>Freiarbeit</i>) into pedagogy and established the "game" as the typical form that life took in childhood, and also the game's educational worth.</p>
Gerber	<p>Magda Gerber was an educator and a student of Emmi Pikler (see below) in Hungary and later emigrated to the US. She coined the term <i>educarer</i>, which refers to a parent or another caregiver and emphasises their dual role in both caring and educating. In 1978 Gerber co-founded (with Tom Forrest, M.D) the Resources for Infant Educarsers (RIE), a non-profit membership organisation that aims to improve infant care and education by educating parents and caregivers.</p> <p>The RIE philosophy incorporates many of Pikler's theories. It is based on respecting infants as if they were fully functioning, spending quality time with them, learning their individual ways of communicating, not treating infants like objects, involving infants in the things that concern them, being honest with infants, and allowing them to try to solve a problem without any adult interference. Further information can be found at http://www.magdagerber.org/</p>
Habits of Mind	<p>The Habits of Mind were derived by Art Costa and subsequently expanded on by him and Bena Kallick. They are defined as 'the dispositions that are skillfully and mindfully employed by characteristically successful people when confronted with problems, the solutions to which are not immediately apparent'. In an education context, the Habits of Mind provide a framework and common language for children, teachers/educators, school or service leaders, parents and the wider community to share when discussing and planning for the development of children's or students' thinking. For further information, see http://www.habitsofmind.org/node/714</p>

Heuristic play	Heuristic play is a term coined by psychologist Elinor Goldschmied in the early 1980s to describe the activity of a toddler playing with objects. Providing a range of everyday real life items and objects (wooden, metal, natural, plastic, glass), that represent diverse cultural settings, for infants and toddlers to explore and manipulate, supports them to make sense of the world around them.
Kindergarten	Friedrich Fröebel (see below) created the term ‘ kindergarten ’. The Free Kindergarten movement in New Zealand had its beginnings in Dunedin in 1889. For further information about the history of kindergartens see: www.nzkindergarten.org.nz/about/history.html Kindergartens are managed and administered by kindergarten associations situated throughout New Zealand. The number of member kindergartens in each association varies from one to 107. Associations have responsibility for the governance and management of individual kindergartens in their area. Association governors, directors or trustees include parent representatives from local kindergartens. Source of information: http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Early-Childhood-Monograph-Series-The-Quality-of-Education-and-Care-in-Kindergartens-January-2009/About-kindergartens
Maslow	Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a theory proposed by American psychologist Abraham Maslow. It is usually portrayed as a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental levels of needs (esteem, friendship and love, security, and physical needs) at the bottom and the need for self-actualisation at the top. The theory suggests that the most fundamental, basic four layers of needs must be met before an individual will strongly desire the secondary or higher level needs. Maslow acknowledged that many different motivations can occur from various levels of the hierarchy, but he focused on identifying the basic types of motivation and the order in which they should be met. For further information, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow’s_hierarchy_of_needs

Montessori	The Montessori movement was founded by Dr. Maria Montessori, who began the first ‘casa dei bambini’ or children’s home in Rome in 1907. Montessori education emphasises independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child’s natural psychological development, as well as technological advances in society. Many Montessori schools and services design their programmes with reference to Montessori’s model of human development, and use pedagogy, lessons and materials derived from teacher training courses she presented during her lifetime. For further information on Montessori education, especially within the Aotearoa New Zealand context, refer to www.montessori.org.nz
Nature Education	The New Zealand Association for Environmental Education (NZAEE) was established in 1984 to foster the development of environmental education in New Zealand. NZAEE is an independent voice, promoting and supporting lifelong learning and behaviours that lead to sustainability. In 2004 NZAEE adopted two policies that called for environmental education to be considered a formal component of the New Zealand Curriculum, and it continues to work towards realising this goal. For further information see http://www.nzaee.org.nz/
Pacific early childhood services	<p>“Pacific peoples” is a general term used to refer to people of Pacific descent who identify strongly with their island nations of origin. Pacific peoples include those born in the islands as well as those born in New Zealand. Each service educates children in at least one Pacific language and culture. In many cases the programme is underpinned by Christian faith. Depending on the goals of its community, a service may be bilingual or immersion, with some being multilingual and multicultural. The first Pacific language early childhood centre opened in Auckland in 1985. Since then, many new Pacific services have been licensed. This reflects the growing Pacific population of New Zealand and strong community support for language and culture-based early childhood services. The Ministry of Education supports the establishment of Pacific services and provides targeted assistance for ongoing development.</p> <p>Source of information: http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Early-Childhood-Monographs-The-Quality-of-Education-and-Care-in-Pacific-Early-Childhood-Services-August-2007</p>

Pikler (RIE)	<p>Emmi Pikler founded and ran the Lóczy orphanage in Budapest, where she put her own infant education theories into practice. Pikler’s philosophy was popularised by Magda Gerber (see above) and is based on the following four curriculum principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of children’s self-initiated activity from their earliest age. • The value of building a trusting relationship with a consistent professional caregiver, whose attitudes are directed by respect for the child’s personality and understanding of his or her needs. • The value of sustaining each child in building self-awareness. This is done through encouraging active participation in whatever is going on – alone or in interaction – rather than simply perceiving the child as an object to be cleaned and fed. • The value of fostering optimal health in the children, reciprocally influenced by the first three points. <p>For further information, see http://www.parentingworx.co.nz/fantastic-reading/emmi-piklers-8-guiding-principles/</p>
Piaget	<p>Swiss developmental psychologist and philosopher Jean Piaget proposed a theory of cognitive development with an epistemological view, which together are known as “genetic epistemology”. Piaget placed great importance on children’s education. The four development stages are described in Piaget’s theory as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sensorimotor stage: from birth to age two. Children experience the world through movement and their five senses. 2. Pre-operational stage: from ages two to seven. Magical thinking predominates; motor skills are acquired. Children cannot conserve or use logical thinking. 3. Concrete operational stage: from ages seven to eleven. Children begin to think logically but are very concrete in their thinking. 4. Formal operational stage: from age eleven to sixteen and onwards. Children develop abstract thought and can easily conserve and think logically in their mind. <p>For further information see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Piaget</p>

<p>Playcentre</p>	<p>Playcentres provide mixed age, half day learning sessions for children aged anywhere from birth to school entry age, and parenting support and courses for their parents. Playcentre philosophy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasises child initiated play and the importance of whānau or families as the children’s first and most important educators, and which whānau or parents run co-operatively as an extension to the family setting. • focuses on providing parents with an adult education programme that emphasises self-help and personal development. • includes the provision of publications and resources to help Playcentre members to enhance their parenting skills and train towards early childhood care and education qualifications. <p>For further details, see Playcentre website http://www.playcentre.org.nz/index.php</p>
<p>Reggio Emilia</p>	<p>The Reggio Emilia approach was started by Loris Malaguzzi and the parents in villages around Reggio Emilia in Italy after World War II. Its philosophy is based on the following principles:</p> <p>The Reggio Emilia approach is focused on children’s natural development and their relationships with their environment. Parents are viewed as partners, collaborators and advocates for their children, respected as their children’s first teacher and involved in all aspects of the curriculum. They often volunteer in Reggio Emilia programmes and incorporate the principles into their parenting and home life. For further information on the Reggio Emilia approach, see the Reggio Children home page http://reggiochildrenfoundation.org/ and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reggio_Emilia_approach</p>

Steiner	<p>Steiner (also known as Waldorf) education was founded in Germany in 1919, based on Rudolf Steiner's 'anthroposophy' philosophy. The Steiner curriculum recognises that children pass through distinct developmental stages, and is designed to deliver the right stimulus at the right time, thus allowing each stage to unfold fully. It emphasises respect, reverence and wonder for nature and human existence. Learning becomes not just the acquisition of vast amounts of information, but an engaging voyage of discovery, both of the world and of oneself.</p> <p>The aim of Rudolf Steiner education is to strengthen the child to meet the challenges of school, and also those of life. For further information on Steiner education in the Aotearoa New Zealand context, see http://www.rudolfsteinerfederation.org.nz/</p>
Te Ao Māori	<p>Te Ao Māori literally translates as "the Māori world". In 1991 Rangimarie Turuki (Rose) Pere developed a Māori educational framework or model, Te Aorangi (the universe), that illustrates the complexity of te ao Māori. This integrates the concepts of wairuatanga (spirituality), tinana (the body), hinengaro (the mind), and whanaungatanga (extended family). It also includes mana (the integrity and prestige of the individual); mauri (the life principle, which includes language); and whatumanawa (the expression of feelings).</p> <p>For further information see: http://www.educate.ece.govt.nz/learning/curriculumAndLearning/Assessmentforlearning/KeiTua o tePae/Book3/FrameworkForBiculturalEducation.aspx</p>
UNESCO Pillars of Knowledge	<p>The International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century produced a report for UNESCO, <i>Learning: The Treasure Within</i>, in 1996. This report proposed that education throughout a person's life is based on four pillars of knowledge: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. These four pillars cannot be anchored solely in one phase in a person's life or in a single place.</p> <p>For further information see www.unesco.org/delors/fourpil.htm</p>

Virtues	The Virtues Project is a worldwide initiative started in 1991, and inspired by the desire to counteract rising violence in and around families. The Virtues Project holds that virtues are the content of our character, and as such are essential to the true goal of education – intelligence plus character. It aims to nurture children in the skills and qualities they need to succeed in education and in life. For further information see http://www.virtuesproject.com/
Vygotsky	Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky formulated a holistic theory of human cultural and biosocial development, which has come to be known as Social Development Theory . It stresses the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition, as he believed strongly that community plays a central role in the process of “making meaning”. Vygotsky died at the age of 38 and his theories are incomplete, but some of his writings are still being translated from Russian. Vygotsky argued that “learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organised, specifically human psychological function”. In other words, social learning tends to precede development. Individual development cannot be accounted for by one single principle, or understood without reference to the social and cultural context within which it is embedded. Higher mental processes in the individual have their origin in social processes. For further information see: www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html

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