



ERO Early Childhood Akatea | Governing Organisation Evaluation First Report

Governing Organisation Name: Go Bananas Childcare Group

Head Office Location: Hamilton

1 ERO's judgement of Go Bananas Childcare Group is as follows:

Indicator	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
Organisational conditions	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
Learning conditions	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling

For an explanation of the judgement terms used and of the evaluation process please refer to the last page of this report. These judgements are based on the evidence provided to ERO during the evaluation process.

Children's health and safety	Improvement required	Taking reasonable steps
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2 ERO's Judgements

A [Governing Organisation Evaluation](#) evaluates the extent to which organisational and learning conditions support equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners. [Te Ara Poutama Indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most](#) is the basis for making judgements about its effectiveness. The [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) - Improvement Framework \(teacher led services\)](#) derived from the indicators, is used to inform the ERO's judgements about the organisation's performance. Evaluation for improvement | Ngā Aronga Whai Hua is integrated across all of the above areas.

3 About the Organisation

Go Bananas Childcare Group is a privately-owned organisation that operates 19 services in the Waikato and Auckland regions. The organisation has undergone significant growth in recent years, with the purchase of early childhood services across both regions. At the time of this evaluation, 17 services were on a full licence and two recently purchased services were on a probationary licence. The organisation-wide values that underpin each service include a focus on relationships and children learning through play, supported by skilled teachers who are committed to ongoing learning.

A senior leadership team holds responsibility for operations, curriculum support and health and safety in the services. The managing director, group general manager and director of finance and compliance, lead governance and human resource operations. Other senior leaders include a director of professional practice, an Auckland area manager and two regional curriculum leads. Within services, there is a range of leadership and co-ordinator roles that manage operations and curriculum. These roles are filled by both qualified and unqualified staff, including a large number of internationally qualified and newly qualified teachers.

Findings from ERO's evaluation at the governance and organisational level included evaluating the extent to which Go Bananas Childcare Group's strategic intentions, quality improvement systems, processes, and practices support the provision of quality education and care at individual service level.

4 Evaluation Findings for the Organisation

Since early 2025 in response to the growth of the organisation, Go Bananas Childcare have been working towards a consistent approach to curriculum, teaching and learning across the two regions. The organisation is in the early stages of embedding this work in curriculum planning and a range of improvement practices that include review, internal evaluation, teachers' professional growth cycles, and service level strategic improvement planning. Existing organisation-wide policies and procedures are well established to support operations and management.

The organisation has developed clear systems and processes to support governance and management and implements some useful quality improvement practices at organisation level.

- An established range of auditing and monitoring tools are in place that enable governance and management to be assured the day-to-day management of services meets regulatory requirements. Current reporting includes compliance, finance, staffing, and occupancy, providing data about health and safety across the organisation. Sufficient reporting relating to the quality of curriculum is not yet evident.
- Relevant organisational policies and procedures guide service-level practice. Senior leaders have taken a strategic approach to embedding a shared understanding of compliance expectations among leaders and teachers, which has contributed to more consistent implementation of processes and curriculum guidance across the organisation.
- Planning at governance level to enable the strategic growth of the organisation has had a focus on building leadership capability within services. A more comprehensive set of goals that collectively guide governance and management towards sustainable growth and improved quality across all services is yet to be developed.
- Some key initiatives for growth have been identified but coordinated organisation-wide planning to implement these is yet to occur. These initiatives relate to supporting services to deepen bicultural and place-based curricula, provide support for professional learning and leadership pathways, enhance transition to school practices, and strengthen data-informed approaches to improving outcomes.

The conditions and capability to do and use evaluation for improvement that supports organisation-wide growth are in the early stages of development.

- Internal evaluation is a new process at organisation level and senior leaders are establishing their understanding with active support of an external mentor.
- Organisation leaders have a clear focus on wider improvement processes (for example internal evaluation, professional growth cycles, and quality improvement planning). These show some useful aspects of evaluative thinking and reasoning.
- Senior leaders have established explicit expectations that services will utilise the range of evaluation frameworks and templates available. However, they are yet to determine the extent to which these processes are supporting professional practices.

A culture of relational trust is well established and enables collaboration across the organisation.

- The Go Bananas Childcare values are visible across the organisation and senior leaders provide some support for services to develop their understanding of them. As there is no formal reporting, senior leaders do not clearly know how much these values shape the curriculum or impact children and their families.
- Senior leaders have managed the regional changes thoughtfully and have gradually introduced a unified approach. They have been responsive in how they have managed the significant change as the regions amalgamate.
- A range of targeted processes have been established to induct internationally qualified and newly qualified teachers. These are in the early stages of implementation.

5 Leadership to support quality education and care

A senior leadership team, with the support of an external mentor provide professional learning, guidance and support for curriculum design and implementation.

Leaders' roles and responsibilities have not been clearly defined to support the rapid growth and unification of the organisation.

- Leaders work collaboratively. A focus on fostering and growing leadership within the organisation is supporting succession planning in both the senior leadership team and services. Currently, there is not sufficient capacity within the senior leadership team to effectively mentor and lead teams.
- Leaders are building their capability and knowledge to design and implement a responsive curriculum to better guide teaching teams. They are in the early stages of building service leaders' and teaching teams' understanding and use of assessment for learning and knowledge of quality teaching.
- Leaders know teaching teams' strengths and areas for growth and provide some differentiated support. Service-level improvement planning is in place but does not yet consistently inform leadership reporting to governance.

6 Summary of findings from visits to sample services

ERO visited a sample of eight services to verify what Go Bananas Childcare Group knows about the quality of each of the services' learning conditions and the extent to which the organisational conditions support service improvement. ERO selected the service sample.

Teachers across most services are in the early stages of understanding quality teaching and their role in supporting children's learning.

- Most teams are developing their collective understanding of how to enact a curriculum consistent with the depth and breadth of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.
- Leaders and teachers are in the early stages of providing a more targeted and responsive curriculum for groups of learners, including those under two years of age and children with additional learning needs. The use of intentional teaching strategies to promote learning is not yet well understood.
- Literacy learning is mostly offered to older children through structured activities, and for all children through meaningful use of oral language. Embedding broader literacies aligned with *Te Whāriki* such as art, maths, music, and dramatic play is still in early stages across all age groups.
- Use of te reo Māori and aspects of tikanga Māori are developing, and local places of significance are reflected in displays. These aspects do not clearly inform planning for tamariki Māori or the wider curriculum.
- Children have regular opportunities to hear and speak their home languages, especially during cultural celebrations, alongside their parents and communities. Individual planning does not yet reflect children's languages and cultures.

Most service leaders and teachers are developing their understanding of how to use evaluation to drive improvement.

- A clear framework for internal evaluation is used consistently across services. Support continues to be provided to build service level knowledge of the process, although at service level there is a lack of delegated responsibility to lead internal evaluation.
- Reviews and quality improvement planning show some positive changes in teacher practice and at times an understanding of evaluation.

7 Where to next for improvement?

Prior to the next ERO evaluation Go Bananas Childcare Group will progress the following actions through its quality improvement planning. This includes to:

- Develop a robust strategic direction for the organisation and develop planning to implement the strategic priorities for improvement as a collective leadership group. Ensure regular monitoring and reporting on progress to maintain momentum and accountability.
- Senior leaders to further develop their evaluative capability to better understand how all systems are enabling equitable and excellent outcomes for learners and use information to inform decision making.
- Senior leaders to strengthen expectations for high quality teaching that better supports early literacy learning reflective of the breadth and depth of *Te whāriki*.

8 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

As part of this review, a representative of Go Bananas Childcare Group completed an *ERO Governing Organisation Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist*. In these documents they stated that the organisation has the systems, processes, and practices to be assured that service providers for licensed services within the organisation are meeting legal requirements related to:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management, and administration.

The licensed service provider/s of the sampled services listed at the end of this report also completed an *ERO Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist* for their service. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements, including those detailed in Ministry of Education Circulars and other documents, related to these areas.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.

9 Next ERO Review

The next ERO evaluation is likely to be in 2 years.



Vivien Ruth
Director of Early Childhood Education

22 January 2026

[*Further information about how ERO evaluates Akatea / Governing Organisations is available here.*](#)

10 About the Governing Organisation

Service types	Education and care service	
Total number of licensed services	19	
Total number of children licensed for across all services	1382 children, including up to 378 aged under 2	
Total number of children enrolled across all services	1018 children, including up to 231 aged under 2	
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 13%; NZ European/Pākehā 8%; Indian 50%; Filipino 10%; Samoan 5%; other Pacific groups 6%; other ethnic groups 11%	
Number of full-time equivalent teachers	Qualified	134
	Unqualified	62
Review team on site	August 2025	
Date of this report	22 January 2026	
Most recent ERO report(s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	No previous ERO Akatea Governing Organisation Evaluation report.	

11 List of sampled services

All sampled services are on a full licence.

Services sampled in this evaluation included:

Profile Number	Name of service	Service Type
30352	Go Bananas Childcare Cambridge	Education and care service
34043	Go Bananas Childcare Boutique Centre	Education and care service
46507	Go Bananas Childcare	Education and care service
47875	Go Bananas Childcare Highland Park	Education and care service
47876	Go Bananas Childcare Target Road	Education and care service
47879	Go Bananas Childcare Kelston	Education and care service
47880	Go Bananas Childcare Papatoetoe	Education and care service
47973	Go Bananas Childcare Takanini	Education and care service

Activities undertaken by the evaluation team

- Pre-visit contact with the service provider/organisation leader(s).
- Meetings and / or conversations with governance, management, and leaders.
- Verification and validation of what the organisation knows about the quality of education and care in its services.
- Reading documentation.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

Activities undertaken by the evaluation team in the service sample visits

- Pre-visit contact with the service leader.
- Meetings and / or conversations with leaders and teachers.
- Verification and validation of information shared by the organisation at service level.
- Reading documentation as service level.
- Scanning the learning environment and resources.
- Observations of interactions and teaching practice while onsite in the sample services.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

Description around ERO's judgement terms

ERO's judgements are based on *Te Ara Poutama* and the *Early Childhood Education Improvement Framework (teacher led services)*.

	Above the threshold for quality
Excelling	The organisation is excelling in the learning and organisational conditions to support high quality education and care for children.
Embedded	The organisation has embedded its learning and organisational conditions to support ongoing improvement in the provision of quality education and care for children.
	Below the threshold for quality
Working towards	The organisation is working towards establishing the learning and organisational conditions to support improvements in the provision of quality education and care for children.
Improvement required	The organisation has not yet developed the learning and organisational conditions to support the provision of quality education and care for children.