

Te Manu Hou

Quarterly Newsletter of New Zealand Kindergartens Inc
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Where to, from here?

NZ Kindergartens Inc asks the politicians for their parties' views on early childhood education issues and their impact on kindergartens today and in the future.

The Labour Party



*Hon Trevor Mallard,
Minister of Education, replies:*

Each of the questions has been answered on the basis of our 1999 election policy manifesto and the policy changes we have achieved in government. The Labour Party is currently developing its 2002 election manifesto.

What evidence can you provide that demonstrates your party's commitment to supporting low cost, accessible, high quality early childhood education for all children?

Labour has demonstrated its commitment to early childhood education during this term of government in a number of ways including setting up the long-term strategic plan working group to recommend ways in which we can improve quality and participation in early childhood education over the next 10 years. We have increased funding to all services, increased the

pool of funding available through discretionary grants – aimed to support the provision of new services particularly in low-socio-economic areas - and introduced equity funding.

Labour believes that the quality of programmes in centres relates to the quality of teachers and adults interactions with children. We are committed to increasing the professional status of early all teachers and to improving standards in teaching. The government has improved the qualification requirements staff in centres and provided incentives and support for these people to upgrade their qualifications. We have established scholarships to encourage and support Māori and Pacific nations people into teacher education.

We have established the Teachers Council which will be involved in the approval and standards setting for initial teacher education programmes. It has the responsibility to develop a code of ethics, establish and monitor criteria for teacher registration, and deal with competency and disciplinary matters within the profession. The make-up and function of the council demonstrates the professional link between teachers and teaching in the early childhood and schools sectors.

Should the State have a hands-on or hands-off role in the provision of early childhood education? How might that be demonstrated?

REMINDER

NZKI ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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I believe the state should have a 'hands on' role in setting quality standards and expectations for early childhood education. In so doing, the government has an obligation to support and assist services through regulation and resourcing, and in planning and co-ordination. In return, I believe services need to be responsive to their communities and accountable for the financial support they receive from government.

Please comment on your party's views on the benefit and value of early childhood education.

Labour believes early childhood education is an investment in the future. We view early childhood education as a basic right, which must be available to all children. We agree with the research evidence that shows high quality programmes impact positively on children's cognitive, language and social development. Quality early childhood education allows children to interact with others beyond their family thereby enriching the experience they have of their world. We also know that children benefit not only while they are attending a service, but long after they attend school.

We also believe that early childhood education services support parents in their role, provide information and advice about their child's development, and provide a place where parents can come together to meet, network and support each other within their local community.

Does your party support the concept of compulsory early childhood education? If so, what form might that take?

Labour does not have a policy of compulsory early childhood education. What we do stand for, is the right for children to experience quality early childhood education and we want to provide the opportunity for every child and their family to be involved.

What are your party's views on kindergarten teachers remaining in the State Sector Act?

Labour believes that kindergarten teachers should remain in the state sector. Returning kindergarten teachers and associations to the state sector was a key Labour policy issue in the lead up to the last election, and amending the State Sector Act to reflect this was one of this government's achievements early in our first term in office.

Does your party support 'centralised' or 'bulk' funding as the mechanism for funding early childhood education services? If your preference is for centralised funding of salaries how would the balance of funding be paid?

Labour policy supports the delivery of funding to early childhood services through a bulk grant. A key issue for Labour is how services use their funding. We want to see the bulk funding used to support high quality services and to contribute to services being more accessible to families.

If elected would your party support the recommendations of the Early Childhood Education Working Party's Ten Year Strategic Plan?

Labour policy determined that the development of a long-term plan was critical for the future of early childhood education after a decade of ad hoc policy changes and planning. This government set up the working group to develop the plan and we are currently considering its recommendations. Many of the recommendations reflect the direction for early childhood education set out in Labour policy.

What are your party's views on pay parity for kindergarten teachers?

Labour supports pay parity for kindergarten teachers. This government set up the working party to identify the benchmarks for implementing pay parity and I have received their final report. Labour believes we should work towards implementing a unified teaching pay scale which includes all early childhood teachers.

If elected, would your party support government policies to a) improve group size and staff: child ratios and b) require staff to be registered teachers, in early childhood services?

Labour policy encourages early childhood services to achieve higher quality through tighter licensing standards related to lowering group sizes, lowering the staff: child ratios, and implementing requirements over time for all teachers to be qualified and registered. An important element in the quality of early childhood education provision, Labour would support government policies to improve group size and staff: child ratios.

The new Education Standards Act 2001 requires early childhood teachers to be registered and ensures early childhood education teachers are represented on the NZ Teachers Council.

Kindergartens are limited to providing only 1080 hours of early childhood education per year – any additional hours are funded by the Ministry of Education at a lower rate. If elected, would your party consider removing this inflexible cap? If not, why not?

The conditions for the receipt of funding by all early childhood services will be an area to be reviewed as we move towards a new regulatory and funding base.

The Alliance Party



Dr Liz Gordon, MP

Education spokesperson replies:

What evidence can you provide that demonstrates your party's commitment to supporting low cost, accessible high quality early childhood education for all children?

The Alliance supports free, high quality, public education at all levels. We have supported all progress towards these goals within the government and believe that further progress will be made.

Should the State have a hands-on or hands-off role in the provision of early childhood education? How might that be demonstrated?

There is a need for increased hands-on policy by the government, in particular to ensure that low-income communities have access to, and take advantage of, early childhood education. We must be more strategic in our thinking around ECE, given its importance for individual development.

Please comment on your party's views on the benefit and value of early childhood education.

If the evidence shows that good quality early childhood education is tremendously beneficial to young children, and that is the basis of Alliance policy.

Does your party support the concept of compulsory early childhood education? If so, what form might that take?

We have not yet come to a view on compulsion, although are leaning towards facilitating 100% participation at four. Significant planning and building of facilities will need to take place before we can meet this promise.

What are your party's views on kindergarten teachers remaining in the State Sector Act?

The Alliance has always supported kindergarten teachers being in the SSA and will continue to do so.

Does your party support "centralised" or "bulk"

funding as the mechanism for funding early childhood education services?

We support the central payment of teacher salaries with operational funding delivered on a similar basis as in schools.

If elected would your party support the recommendations of the Early Childhood Education Ten Year Strategic Plan, or cast them aside as being another party's initiative?

Yes, in terms of broad direction.

What are your party's views on pay parity for kindergarten teachers?

The Alliance has always taken a lead, publicly and within the government, in advocating pay parity for kindergarten teachers. This will lead to improved status for ECE teachers as well as fair pay.

If elected, would your party support Government policies to improve group size and staff: child ratios and b) require staff to be registered teachers, in early childhood services?

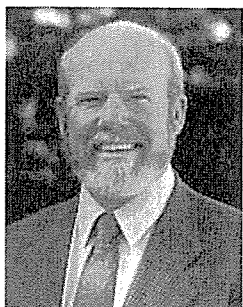
Yes, the government is making significant progress on these issues.

Kindergartens are limited to providing only 1080 hours of early childhood education per year – any additional hours are funded by the Ministry of Education at a lower rate. If elected would your party consider removing this inflexible cap? If not, why not?

Yes, as part of a broader review. As well we strongly support the building of early childhood facilities on existing school grounds, to provide better integration between ECE and school models.

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The Green Party

*Ian Ewen-Street, Green Party
Musterer (Whip),
Education spokesperson replies:*

What evidence can you provide that demonstrates your party's commitment to supporting low

cost, accessible high quality early childhood education for all children?

Green Party believes in the universality of education and accessible high quality early childhood education for all children. One of the Green's four core principles is social justice. We have consistently, challenged the Government to improve equity and reduce injustices, by ensuring all people in New Zealand can access education and social services. We believe that access to these fundamental services such as education should be universal.

The Greens will work towards raising participation rates, particularly amongst Maori, Pacific and low income families who are under represented. An example of the Green's holistic approach to education is last year's Green budget initiative to support schools to develop organic gardens. These help teach children valuable life skills as well as a greater understanding of their environment.

Should the State have a hands-on role in the provision of early childhood education? How might that be demonstrated?

Green Party believes the Government on behalf of its citizens has a responsibility to be involved in the provision of early childhood education. The Government has a responsibility on behalf of all its citizens to support a viable, innovative and diverse early childhood education sector. Funding not just for session hours, but increased funding for professional development and teacher salaries. But the education system cannot stand-alone. While more funding for kindergartens and other early childhood education centres is needed it is not the whole story. Strong communities and families are also important to facilitate children's learning – both within kindergartens and in the home, and wherever children play and gather. Formal education is only a part of learning and we must find ways to build on classroom learning.

Please comment on your party's views on the benefit and value of early childhood education.

Early Childhood Education is an integral part of

children's life experiences. The Green Party believes that kindergartens and other EC services provide a vitally important learning experience for our children. Research clearly shows that investment in quality early childhood education pays off. The Greens would increase funding for non-profit centres. Kindergartens and other early childhood services must be allowed to do what they do best and that is educate our children. Too much valuable time is spent on administration, filling out forms for childcare subsidy and ECE grants. The early childhood sector can play a significant role in building, maintaining and sustaining local communities. It can also help parents to improve their parenting skills. Early childhood education is but one of the first steps in learning. In some areas there needs to be a better transition to compulsory schooling and on.

Does your party support the concept of compulsory early childhood education? If so, what form might that take?

Green Party supports 100% participation in early childhood education. The Green Party believes in an innovative and diverse early childhood education sector that can meet the needs of all pre-school children. We would like to see all children receiving education and learning in a variety of forms – in both formal and informal settings. As stated above early childhood education is an integral part of a child's learning and growing.

What are your party's views on kindergarten teachers remaining in the State Sector Act?

Kindergarten teachers should remain in the State Sector Act. Our policy states that kindergarten teachers should be under the state sector, and that we support pay parity between early childhood teachers and other teachers in the school system based on qualifications.

Does your party support "centralised" or bulk funding as the mechanism for funding early childhood education services?

The Greens would review the current bulk funding system. The Greens opposed the bulk funding of the compulsory schools sector. As bulk funding has been part of the early childhood sector for much longer than schools we believe it is important to review the situation and provide a well managed approach to address anomalies. As stated we believe the government has a role to play in providing sufficient funding to services so that they can pay staff good salaries.

If elected your party support the recommendations of the Early Childhood Education Ten Year Strategic

Plan or cast them aside as being another party's initiative?

The Greens support the work of the Early Childhood Education Strategy Plan Working Group. The Greens support the direction of the Plan to facilitate the implementation of Te Whaariki; improve co-ordination to support the contributions made by parents, teachers and educators, and to ensure that Government takes a more active and responsive role in EC services. We will work closely with parents, educators and service providers to implement strategies to meet these outcomes.

What are your party's views on pay parity for kindergarten teachers?

The Greens support pay parity. Green Party policy is to introduce pay parity between early childhood teachers and other teachers in the school system based on qualifications. We also support the introduction of measures to reduce the gender pay gap, so we can realise pay equity. Last year the Greens made significant changes to strengthen the role of the new Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Commissioner to ensure that pay equity is specified in legislation as a function of this Commissioner.

If elected would your party support Government policies to improve group size and staff: child ratios and b) require staff to be registered teachers in early childhood services?

The Greens want lower class sizes and a fully registered teaching force. Staff child ratios should be improved with more funding for staffing. As a result of this more needs to be done to improve facilities to provide more classrooms, and play areas. More space should be provided to allow greater parental and community involvement within kindergartens.

The Greens will work towards ensuring all staff had teaching qualifications and are registered. It is important that any registration or qualification assessment includes recognition of prior learning and it appropriate for Maori and Pacific teachers.

Kindergartens are limited to providing only 1080 hours of early childhood education per year – any additional hours are funded by the Ministry of Education at a lower rate. If elected would your party consider removing this inflexible cap? If not, why not?

The Greens will consider the removal of the cap on funding for kindergartens. There are waiting lists for children to attend kindergarten.

United Future Party



Hon Peter Dunne, MP

Leader of United Future replies:

What evidence can you provide that demonstrates your party's commitment to supporting low cost, accessible high quality early childhood education for all children?

United Future believes experiences gained in the early years of a child's life are the most important for social, cognitive, physical and cultural development. Success in these early years generally equates to success in later years. Investment in high quality early childhood education can address some of the socio-economic disadvantages many children face.

United Future will guarantee all pre-school children over the age of three years, the right to access up to 15 hours per week early childhood education and increase tax rebates currently available for child care costs.

Should the State have a hands-on or hands-off role in the provision of early childhood education? How might that be demonstrated?

United Future believes the State has a responsibility to provide all children with access to early childhood education, as experiences gained during these early years are an investment to society as a whole. When education is recognised as treated as an investment, the performance of educational providers must be measured and be expected to be of a required standard. The Te Whaariki early childhood curriculum should be a compulsory component in the early childhood education framework to ensure all childhood education providers offer high quality pre-school education in a culturally sensitive and stimulating environment, and that it is effective and relevant to the demands of the modern society in which we live.

Please comment on your party's views on the benefit and value of early childhood education?

New Zealand children need high quality early childhood learning opportunities in a safe and stimulating environment. United Future believes that quality early childhood education is the key to a fair, strong and prosperous society. Quality education leads to full participation in community life, to enhanced employment opportunities, health and well being and the formation of good relationships. It means our children have a much greater opportunity to reach their full potential.

Does your party support the concept of compulsory early childhood education?

No. United Future believes that parents are a child's first teacher. Therefore, it is parents rather than governments, who are best placed to choose the most appropriate form of care and education. For some parents this will be in the community and for others it will be the home environment.

What are your party's views on kindergarten teachers remaining in the State Sector Act?

United Future leader, Hon Peter Dunne, opposed the National Government's move to remove kindergarten teachers from the State Sector Act and has consequently supported Labour's reinstatement.

Does your party support "centralised" or "bulk" funding as the mechanism for funding early childhood education services? If your preference is for centralised funding of salaries how would the balance of the funding be paid?

United Future supports the current funding regime for kindergartens.

If elected would your party support the recommendations of the Early Childhood Education Working Party's Ten Year Strategic Plan?

Yes.

What are your party's views on pay parity for kindergarten teachers?

United Future believes kindergarten teachers must be accorded the support and remuneration that they deserve. Therefore we fully support pay parity for kindergarten teachers.

If elected, would your party support Government policies to improve group size and staff: child ratios and b) require staff to be registered teachers, in early childhood services?

Yes. United Future supports an improvement in staff: child ratios. We would require all kindergarten teachers to be registered, as parents have the right to know that their child is receiving quality education and that their teacher is effective and accountable.

Kindergartens are limited to providing only 1080 hours of early childhood education per year – any additional hours are funded by the Ministry of Education at a lower rate. If elected would your party consider removing this inflexible cap? If not, why not?

Yes. United Future supports allowing all children over the age of three years the right to access up to 15 hours early childhood education and the current cap does not provide this.

The National Party

Anne Tolley, MP,

Early childhood education spokesperson replies:

What evidence can you provide that demonstrates your party's commitment to supporting low cost, accessible high quality early childhood education for all children?

National is committed to listening to the voices of our children, and their families and whanau. Children are the most precious assets of any society and all early childhood care and education service planning and delivery must provide quality services that offer opportunities to play, learn and develop.

Should the State have a hands-on or hands-off role in the provision of early childhood education? How might that be demonstrated?

National will ensure that a child-centred approach is taken. The interests of the child are paramount and the 'best interests' of children will guide all decision-making.

Please comment on your party's views on the benefit and value of early childhood education.

National has long recognised the importance of Early Childhood Education and Care and the diverse needs of New Zealand families and whanau. The Budget provision increased through the 1990's from 3% of the Education budget in the 1990/91 year to 4.7% in their last year in Government, as they sought to support that development and diversity.

Does your party support "centralised" or "bulk" funding as the mechanism for funding early childhood education services?

There is an absolute commitment to the development and promotion of quality early childhood education and care services, while recognising that services must address local needs. Empowerment and education of parents and family and whanau provide a head start in development. National is concerned that the current Government is cutting funding for early intervention programmes like PAFT which provide valuable support for young families in those early years.

It is important that all children have the opportunity to participate in early childhood services and National will work in partnership with children, families and whanau, practitioners and the wider community to develop a diverse range of services. Innovative approaches that acknowledge and encourage diversity within our communities must be supported. It is interesting to note that the increasing demand for all day services, as more women with young children return to the workforce, has seen the Education and Care sector grow 129.5% in the 1990's, while over this same period Playcentres which depend upon parent's 'hands-on' involvement, declined by 30%.

Does your party support the concept of compulsory early childhood education? If so, what form might that take?

Half of a child's ability to learn is developed in the first four years of their life. It is now well established through research that quality early childhood education is extremely significant in the development of numeracy, literacy, physical and social skills for children. National is committed to ensuring that New Zealand children are able to access the services they need to ensure a good start in life. The New Zealand Early Childhood sector is diverse and innovative, with considerable investment by the private sector and by communities themselves. National certainly values this diversity and welcomes the commitment to New Zealand children.

National values highly the skills and experience of those who work in the Early Childhood sector. They are as varied as the services they provide. Again National is committed to quality, and believes that confident, professional Early Childhood educators can develop excellent learning environments working in partnership with families and within the educational framework of New Zealand.

What are your party's views on kindergarten teachers remaining in the State Sector Act?

National will promote career pathways for those who chose to work in Early Childhood education and will ensure qualifications that prepare adults to provide

excellence in the care, education and nurturing of young children.

If elected would your party support the recommendations of the Early Childhood Education Ten Year Strategic Plan, or cast them aside as being another party's initiative?

We are concerned that the chronic shortage of suitably trained and competent staff has been exacerbated by this current Government's policies. The current outflow of competent and experienced 'points' staff from the sector must be halted. The Strategic Plan produced last year did nothing to address this looming staffing crisis. National is also concerned that the Early Childhood Strategic Plan Working Group ignored evidence that training providers would not be able to provide sufficient training places to meet the Plan's proposal that all staff will have a Teachers Registration Board registered qualification or be in training.

Te Whaariki has proven to be a valuable and practical set of principles, aims and goals to guide educators and managers in the development of New Zealand children in Early Childhood education and care. We are the envy of many internationally for such a comprehensive plan. Te Whaariki must remain dynamic, and be used widely across the sector. National also believes it is important to link Te Whaariki into the compulsory school sector to ensure a stable, timely and positive transition for all children.

If elected, would your party support Government policies to improve group size and staff: child ratios and b) require staff to be registered teachers, in early childhood services?

The New Zealand National Party is developing exciting policies for the Early Education and Care sector.

What are your party's views on pay parity for kindergarten teachers? Kindergartens are limited to providing only 1080 hours of early childhood education per year – any additional hours are funded by the Ministry of Education at a lower rate. If elected would your party consider removing this inflexible cap? If not, why not?

At this stage discussions are still taking place about issues such as group sizes, ratios, funding levels and criteria, qualifications of staff, the effects of pay parity for just kindergarten teachers, the licensing and regulatory framework, language resources, and the appropriate roles for Government and the sector itself. I welcome any comment or views from those of you who are so vital to the Early Childhood Education sector.

Kindergartens are exciting places for children and their families, and I am constantly impressed by the professionalism, enthusiasm and often breathtaking 'creativity' of the teachers and staff I have met around New Zealand. Children are a joy. They all deserve the very best start in life and National is committed to making that a reality.

The Act Party



*Donna Awatere-Huata, MP
Education spokesperson replies:*

What evidence can you provide that demonstrates your party's commitment to supporting low cost, accessible high quality early childhood education for all children?

ACT is the only party to consistently raise the issue of preschool education in the House. We have criticised both National and Labour governments for the imbalance of funding whereby the preschool sector – the most important sector – receives less than five per cent of the education budget.

Should the State have a hands-on or hands-off role in the provision of early childhood education? How might that be demonstrated?

The government's only role should be to create a framework for the delivery of preschool services, in conjunction with parents, teachers and interested parties. The framework should outline what we want to achieve and what outcomes we expect from preschool providers. When the State was a monopoly provider there were only 2 options – one was kindergarten, the other was playcentre. Today it is the private sector where we see the greatest innovation.

Please comment on your party's views on the benefit and value of early childhood education.

ACT is the only Party in parliament that has consistently advocated for increased funding to parenting

programmes and preschool services. We are the only party that has protested the huge capture of the education vote by the tertiary sector, because it has been at the expense of the preschool and primary sectors.

Does your party support the concept of compulsory early childhood education? If so, what form might that take?

Absolutely not.

What are your party's views on kindergarten teachers remaining in the State Sector Act?

ACT believes that communities know what is best for their own children. We would leave all employment matters to kindergarten local boards of trustees.

Does your party support "centralised" or "bulk" funding as the mechanism for funding early childhood education services?

No, we are in favour of bulk funding because the boards of trustees and management are far more capable of making sensible practical decisions for the children in their care than Wellington bureaucrats.

If elected would your party support the recommendations of the Early Childhood Education Ten Year Strategic Plan, or cast them aside as being another party's initiative?

No. It is a worthless document that isn't worth the paper it's written on.

What are your party's views on pay parity for kindergarten teachers?

ACT believes in performance-based pay. We believe that boards of trustees and managers are far more capable of assessing a teacher's worth than a bureaucrat or trade union official in Wellington who doesn't know the children involved, let alone the quality of the teachers. You cannot manage quality by remote control.

If elected, would your party support Government policies to improve group size and staff: child ratios and b) require staff to be registered teachers, in early childhood services?

- a) We would require higher quality educational services and that will carry some cost.
- b) No, we believe that the boards of trustees and managers of preschool centres must be required to achieve educational outcomes. How they achieve and exceed these targets will be up to them. We will monitor the outcomes, not just the processes.

Kindergartens are limited to providing only 1080 hours of early childhood education per year – any additional hours are funded by the Ministry of Education at a lower rate. If elected would your party consider removing this inflexible cap? If not, why not?

Kindergartens should have the freedom to be flexible in when and how they deliver their services.

The New Zealand First Party



*Hon Brian Donnelly, MP
Education spokesperson replies:*

What evidence can you provide that demonstrates your party's commitment to supporting low cost, accessible high quality early childhood education for all children?

NZ First can point to its record while in government in 1997-98. Not only did we ensure a large increase financial investment relative to inflation, we also promulgated the DOPS, developed the DOP's support material and initiated the staffing qualifications review.

Should the State have a hands-on or hands-off role in the provision of early childhood education? How might that be demonstrated?

The State has a responsibility for the security and safety of our children, the maximisation of intellectual, social and emotional development of its citizens and the creation of a gender fair environment. To this end the State must operate a regulatory funding and monitoring framework which maintains diversity of provision which best meets the needs of families.

Please comment on your party's views on the benefit and value of early childhood education.

Early childhood development is determinative of later

childhood development and therefore is critical to optimisation of the human capital of our society. The most important early childhood education takes place in the family/whanau setting. Formal early childhood education can contribute positively as long as it meets quality criteria.

Does your party support the concept of compulsory early childhood education? If so, what form might that take?

No.

What are your party's views on kindergarten teachers remaining in the State Sector Act?

Either all early childhood teachers are part of the State Sector Act (with greater hands-on-by the State) or none.

Does your party support "centralised" or "bulk" funding as the mechanism for funding early childhood education services?

NZ First believes that unless the regulatory framework for early childhood education is completely restructured, bulk-funding is the only viable mechanism.

If elected would your party support the recommendations of the Early Childhood Education Ten Year Strategic Plan, or cast them aside as being another party's initiative?

In principle, not in detail.

What are your party's views on pay parity for kindergarten teachers?

NZ First believes in pay equivalence between all early childhood teachers and teachers in the compulsory sector.

If elected, would your party support Government policies to improve group size and staff: child ratios and b) require staff to be registered teachers, in early childhood services?

Yes

Kindergartens are limited to providing only 1080 hours of early childhood education per year – any additional hours are funded by the Ministry of Education at a lower rate. If elected would your party consider removing this inflexible cap? If not, why not?

NZ First believes that all early childhood providers providing quality provision should be funded at the same level. When this is achieved there is no reason for a cap on hours for kindergartens.

Observation: contributions from a NZKI Board member

Richard Tattersfield
NZKI Board member

Honorary degree for all partners of early childhood teaching graduates? (or a partner's guide to surviving Teachers' College)

First and most importantly, buy as many shares in "3M" and "Bic" as possible. This will at least help subsidise the cost of "post it notes" and "highlighters."

None of the Colleges' promotional pamphlets warn you that most kitchen appliances and food will be covered in various coloured post-it notes. No longer do I drink coffee or eating cereal, suddenly it is kawhe and kaiota. Fruit is for viewing only as it becomes most confusing and annoying if you eat the last pea and then place the note very carefully on the huakiwi (thus showing that I remember to recycle) but most frustrating is the re-labelling of the wine. I still do not know what some of the labels are.

You take your life into your own hands when asked to proof read an essay or assignment, as (a) sometimes you don't really understand what the heck you are reading and (b) the said assignment is usually given to you to proof "in your own time" which means now, not when your favourite programme has finished and (c) you know you are in trouble when you are asked "is that what you really think?"

However, I do have my uses when it comes time to sculpture a comet out of ice and mud for a Time & Space assignment. (we received an 'A' for that one). Tolerance is essential - especially during Biotechnology assignments. Imagine eight trays of broccoli plants adorning your lounge windowsill: every time you open or close the curtains at least one tray will be knocked off and end up on the carpet (upside-down of course) or, imagine being used as a guinea pig for behaviour management skills!

I was really rapt when our essay/assignment received a very well deserved 'A' but once or twice I wondered if the tutor was having a bad day when our mark was slightly lower than anticipated. However, for all of my unspoken grizzles, I am surprised at the range of subjects and depth of the lectures and essays.

It has also given me a more personal insight into the other side of my early childhood experience (3-4 years on local committees, 5 years on my local kindergarten association board and coming up 4 years with NZKI). This has lead to some interesting discussions/ debates

and Jenny's (my partner) favourite closing is "We will just have to agree to disagree on that" – interpretation – I'm not quite as right as she is, after all which one of us is at college.

It has reinforced my support for pay parity and has also highlighted the misunderstandings of teachers in other sectors. Comments like "early childhood teachers aren't real teachers", "I'm only doing early childhood because I couldn't get into primary" and "early childhood education doesn't have a curriculum", highlight the ignorance held by a surprisingly large number in the teaching profession. I hope that once pay parity is phased in, this attitude and acceptance of the early childhood sector will change.

Although this is only Year One for "us", it doesn't take much to realise that early childhood teachers are indeed "real teachers".

We welcome Southland Kindergarten Association as members of NZKI.

Their contact details are as follows:

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TE MANU HOU ADVERTISING RATES

Full page	\$150.00
Half page	\$75.00
Quarter page	\$40.00
Less than quarter page	\$30.00

Federated Early Childhood Education Organisations of N.Z. Inc. (FECEO)

NZKI is a member of FECEO. What is this organisation's function and who are its members?

*Rose Cole, Chief Executive,
Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZ Childcare
Association
Representative on FECEO Council since 1994.*

FECEO is a committee of representatives from national early childhood education organisations, with a commitment to high quality education and their community throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand, and with a focus on the best interests of the children, whānau and educators they represent.

FECEO membership reflects the diverse nature of early childhood education services within Aotearoa/New Zealand, and has a current membership of sixteen national organisations. The members include: CCS, Barnardos, NZKI, OMEP, NZ Childcare Association, Hospital Play Specialists Association, NZ Playcentre Federation, National Association of Early Childhood Directors, Bethlehem Institute of Education, NZEI, Montessori Association of NZ, Christian Early Childhood Education Association of Aotearoa, NZ Family Day Care Association, Correspondence School, Nanny Education Organisation of NZ and APNZ.

The FECEO Council is made up of representatives from each member organisation and meets in Wellington every 2 months. Chairing of meetings is a shared responsibility but there is a contracted secretary.

FECEO meetings provide a unique opportunity for groups to come together to share innovations and concerns that impact on all those involved in early childhood education.

The FECEO Council has been meeting regularly since 1986. The symbol of FECEO is a woven mat. This represents the weaving together of diverse groups with their own unique philosophy and structure who are united by similar aims – the promotion of early childhood education and to support families in Aotearoa New Zealand. The objectives of FECEO include:

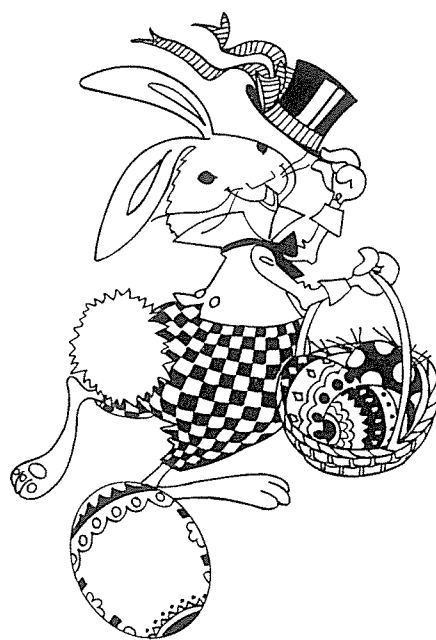
- To promote early childhood education which is provided and delivered according to the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi
- To promote equitable access for all families in Aotearoa/ New Zealand to early childhood education

services suitable for, and appropriate to their needs

- To promote the interests of early childhood education
- To encourage the provision of a variety of early childhood services
- To disseminate information through meetings, seminars, conferences, and publishing and circulating any reports, periodicals, books, pamphlets or other relevant material
- To act as a medium for co-ordinated approaches to the Government and its agencies
- To foster and support the continuing advancement of all FECEO members and to provide a vehicle for any desired co-ordination of activities between members.

FECEO meetings provide a useful forum for members to keep informed of and alert to developments within the sector, as well as enabling a combined approach to issues which could have a adverse affect on quality early childhood education.

HAPPY
EASTER



National Poisons Centre Freephone 0800 POISON (0800- 764 766)

*Leonie McCormack, Assistant Programme Manager
Injury Prevention Division, ACC, Wellington*

Every year in New Zealand, more than 1,000 people need to be hospitalised following an unintentional poisoning – that's almost three a day! Children under the age of five are particularly vulnerable, accounting for one third of these hospitalisations.

ACC has joined forces with the National Poisons Centre to help reduce the number of poisonings.

The National Poisons Centre is located in Dunedin. The Centre runs a 24-hour helpline to provide expert advice on poisonings and poisoning prevention. However, the Centre's services have not been fully utilised, mainly due to a lack of awareness about the Centre and the fact that calls from outside Dunedin to the Centre are toll free. There is evidence that the cost of the toll call stops many people from ringing.

ACC has been working with the National Poisons Centre in setting up the 0800 POISON (0800 764 766) number, so that all New Zealanders will have free access to the National Poisons Centre's services.

The Centre can provide advice on:

- How to safely store and handle poisons in the home
- How to keep children safe from poisons
- What to do if a poisoning or a suspected poisoning occurs
- How to identify poisonous plants
- How to safely store and handle poisons in the workplace

0800 POISON has been operational since 9 October 2001.



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