EARLY LEARNING
What is Early Learning?

The ‘education journey’ starts well before children reach school. It starts with quality early learning – either in the home or through attending one of the many options for Early Learning.

Early Learning is the learning that happens from birth. Parents/caregivers and whānau are a child’s first and most important teachers. Children learn everywhere and all the time through everyday activities parents/caregivers and whānau help their child’s brains grow through play and positive experiences. What a child learns in their early years makes a big difference to how they learn for the rest of their lives.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the education and care provided by a range of certificated or licensed early learning providers for children before they go to primary school. Building on the skills they learn at home and from their families/whānau, children in ECE environments also learn through a wide range of learning experiences. They learn to be curious, get involved, and keep going when things are difficult (perseverance), to communicate ideas and to take responsibility. These types of skills help them to become healthy, happy and capable people and grow into confident learners as well as form a strong foundation for later learning.

Research shows that regular participation in quality ECE significantly increases a child’s chance of future educational success, particularly for children from vulnerable families. It is a critical step in a child’s learning journey and has a positive impact on learning dispositions and social-emotional wellbeing, skills and competencies that enable a child to keep learning.

Taking part in quality ECE is not compulsory in New Zealand, but it is encouraged as it builds a strong foundation for children’s ongoing education, learning and development. There are a range of options for ECE available - offering different services, facilities, hours, and prices. Each has its own way of working with children and their parents. Some offer all day education and care, some only part day. Some are led by registered teachers, and some are led by parents, whānau or caregivers.

Publications and Information Sheets

To request a copy contact ECE
ece.info@education.govt.nz
0800 323 323

Early Learning – a great start
A pocket handout for anyone who works with parents and whānau and who wants to find out more about the potential benefits of early learning.

Early childhood education: Be involved, get involved
A pocket handout that provides information for parents and whānau about getting involved in early childhood education.

Early childhood education: Be involved, get involved
A booklet for anyone who works with parents and whānau (frontline service staff). Provides key messages and information to support conversations to support and encourage parents and whānau to be involved in early learning and get enrolled.

Choices
A comprehensive booklet for parents, whānau and caregivers who want to find out more about early learning and ECE, and how to choose learning options that suit their child, family and whanau.
Digital Resources

Early Learning Services
Find an Early Learning Centre
Educationcounts.govt.nz/find-an-els

Find an Early Learning Centre or Service within New Zealand.

Ministry of Education
Parents Portal Early Learning (0-6 year olds)
Education.govt.nz/early-learning

Find what you need to know about Early Learning and Early Childhood education in New Zealand (0-6 Years, Early Childhood).

SKIP
Strategies with Kids, Information for Parents
Skip.org.nz

This website provides support, information and parenting strategies for parents and caregivers of children up to 5 years old.

Community Innovations in ECE (VIDEO)
http://youtu.be/0uWj5raxGGI

This video highlights community led innovations underway in Auckland to increase participation at grass roots level.

Ngati Whakaue (VIDEO)
http://youtu.be/x7ImEnRhVEY

Describes a case study of Ngāti Whakaue working with the Ministry on practices and strategies to support culturally responsive early learning activities.

Early Learning Taskforce (VIDEO)
http://youtu.be/EitPY5TtPE

This video describes a case study undertaken in Kaikohe and Wairoa about the importance of communities leading practices and strategies to support early learning.