



Education Report: Early Childhood Advisory Committee feedback on Draft Terms of Reference for the 10 Year Strategic Plan for Early Learning

To:	Hon. Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	22 March 2018	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1115434
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No		

Purpose of report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

- **Note** the feedback received from the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) on the Draft Terms of Reference for the 10 Year Strategic Plan for Early Learning.
- **Agree** to the revised Terms of Reference (attached as annex 1).

Summary

- This briefing provides you with a summary of :
 - feedback on the draft Terms of Reference for the 10 Year Strategic Plan for Early Learning; and
 - proposed changes to the Terms of Reference based on this feedback.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** the feedback received from the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) on the Draft Terms of Reference for the 10 Year Strategic Plan for Early Learning.

Noted

- b. **agree** to the revised Terms of Reference for the 10 Year Strategic Plan for Early Learning (attached as annex 1).

Agree / Disagree

- c. **agree** that this Education Report is proactively released as part of the next publication

Agree / Disagree

Nancy Bell
Director, Early Learning
Early Learning and Student Achievement

22/3/18

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

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Background

1. You requested that we consult on the Draft Terms of Reference for the Strategic Plan with the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) as the Ministry's early learning sector advisory body. We undertook this consultation on 19 and 20 March 2018.
2. This report provides you with a summary of the feedback received from the member organisations of ECAC on the Draft Terms of Reference for the 10 Year Strategic Plan for Early Learning and our proposed changes to the Terms of Reference on the basis of this feedback.

Summary of Feedback

3. Draft Terms of Reference were sent to the ECAC representatives from the following organisations:
 - Barnardos New Zealand
 - Christian Early Childhood Education Association of Aotearoa
 - Early Childhood Council
 - Early Childhood Leadership Group
 - Education Council
 - Early Intervention Association of Aotearoa New Zealand (EIAANZ)
 - The Federation of Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Schools in New Zealand
 - Home Early Learning Organisation (HELO)
 - Hospital Play Specialists
 - Montessori Aotearoa of NZ (MANZ)
 - New Zealand Home-based Early Childhood Education Association
 - NZEI Te Rui Roa
 - NZ Kindergartens Inc.
 - Pasifika Advisory Group
 - Playcentre Federation of New Zealand
 - Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu
 - Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust
 - Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand
4. Fifteen organisations provided feedback on the Draft Terms of Reference. Table 1 below summarises the feedback from these organisations and our suggested changes to the Terms of Reference to reflect this feedback.
5. The following organisations did not provide any feedback on the Draft Terms of Reference:
 - Pasifika Advisory Group
 - NZEI Te Rui Roa
 - Early Childhood Leadership Group

Table1: Feedback from ECAC organisations

Organisation	Feedback	Actions
Barnardos New Zealand	Suggests strengthening the theme of placing children at the centre and reflecting a rights based approach to accessing high quality, free education. The role of quality early learning on future social skills / outcomes should be reflected through the document. There is an opportunity to maximise and partnerships with the education sector and NGO's to improve outcomes for children. Considering how to make the profession attractive for both men and women, and support life long careers should be reflected through the paper. The focus should be on how best the Government and sector can support parents to exert choice in their children's learning, by maximising the value of a mature and competitive market.	Noted
Christian Early Childhood Education Association of Aotearoa	Supportive of the Terms of Reference – “very comprehensive, picking up from 2002”.	Noted
	Noted that quality should include staff and recognise teacher supply issues.	Noted
Early Childhood Council	No review of the previous strategic plan in the process of work to be undertaken as part of developing the new strategic plan.	Noted
	Concerned that some of the language used in the draft Terms of Reference appears to be politically biased and unnecessarily anti-private.	Noted
	Status of the strategic plan not outlined, how will it sit against legislation, regulation, licensing criteria etc?	Noted
	Work programme outlined is wide ranging and risks repeating work that has already been done, eg. the review of Te Whāriki, the review of the NZ Curriculum, the Pasifika Education Plan, the ECE Funding review.	Noted
	Putting the Government's detailed objectives into the Terms of Reference steers the work of the group(s) in particular directions, irrespective of the views of the sector. The plan reads as being pre-determined with limited opportunities for real stakeholder connection.	Noted
Education Council	Supportive of the Terms of Reference.	Noted

Early Intervention Association of Aotearoa New Zealand (EIAANZ)	Supportive of the Terms of Reference – “It looks a great basis for moving forward.”	Noted
The Federation of Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Schools in New Zealand	Concern that the question about parent choice implies a pre-determination that some philosophies should not be available to parents. Use of terms public, private and community based centres is emotive and confusing. Further clarity required.	Noted
Home Early Learning Organisation (HELO)	Supportive of the Terms of Reference.	Noted
Hospital Play Specialists	Noted there was no early learning statement under the “21st century learning” objective. Greater guidance is required about what is meant by 21st century learning.	Noted
	Raised concerns there was no specific mention of UNCROC. Strong focus on equity of opportunity but nothing specific about children with special educational and/or health needs.	Noted
Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand (MANZ)	Concerned that there is a significant amount of work happening across the sector and that this will need to be carefully managed.	Noted
New Zealand Home-based Early Childhood Education Association	Supportive of the Terms of Reference – “comprehensive and robust” Queried how this work will be informed by the home-based review. Supportive of minimum qualifications for educators and transparent funding for parents in home-based review Terms of Reference.	Noted
NZ Kindergartens Inc	Terms of Reference need to show in more detail how the Strategic Plan work will relate to the Government’s wider education work programme.	Added sentence to further explain relationship between work programmes
NZ Playcentre Federation	Concerned parent-led ECE is not visible in the document. Suggested two questions be added to address this: ‘How can government encourage/support parents/whānau to make informed choices about their children’s early childhood education which will support children’s well-being and ensure they have	Questions in Terms of Reference have been changed to incorporate feedback

	the support they need for successful educational journeys?" 'How do we develop and support parents and whānau understanding of their role in educating and advocating for their tamariki, and what high quality services look like?"	
Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust	Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust noted that their current Treaty claim was based on the previous government not formally including them in the advisory group process for that government's early learning strategic plan. While they are part of the Reference Group (as a member of ECAC) they are also concerned that the Trust has not been formally involved in the nomination process for the Ministerial Advisory Group (as past Māori nominees to other groups have not had views consistent with the Trust and in some instances have actively worked against the Trust's interests, which is also addressed in the Treaty claim process).	Noted
Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu	Concerned about the limited reflection in the Terms of Reference of the integral role that parents and whānau and the community play in a child's life and early learning development.	Noted
Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand	Supportive of the Terms of Reference – "This is a well thought out document and captures the essence of the intent of what should be covered in the scope of the plan".	Noted
	Noted that the workforce strategy should be included in the section on related work.	Added workforce strategy

Next steps

6. The final draft of the Cabinet paper and Terms of Reference are due to be lodged with Cabinet Office on 22 March for consideration at SWC on 28 March.
7. It is intended that this Education Report is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annexes

Annex 1: Final Terms of Reference for the 10 Year Strategic Plan

Proactively Released

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

Development of a 10 year Strategic Plan for Early Learning

Hon Chris Hipkins – Minister of Education – has asked the Ministry of Education to work with parents, teachers, stakeholders, including kōhanga reo whānau and other kaupapa Māori early learning providers, and the wider community to develop a ten-year strategic plan for early learning (Early Learning Strategic Plan). This will build on Ngā Huarahi Arataki – *Pathways to the Future 2002-2012, a 10 Year Strategic Plan for ECE (Pathways to the Future)*.

These Terms of Reference explain:

- the scope and guiding principles underpinning the development of the Early Learning Strategic Plan
- the development process, including how the Ministry of Education will work with the sector to co-construct a new Strategic Plan
- how people can participate in the development process.

Context

In 2002, the Ministry of Education launched *Pathways to the Future*, which outlined a high-level shared vision for the future of the early learning sector¹. This was supported by subsequent actions, such as a review of funding and regulations in the early learning sector.

Pathways to the Future was effectively discontinued by the previous Government in 2009. There is a strong case for once again having a strategic plan to set out a systematic and stepped approach to continuing to develop and strengthen the early learning sector, to meet the needs of children and their families and whānau.

In doing so, the approach taken in *Pathways to the Future* will need to be updated to take account of changes that have occurred since 2002 within the early learning sector, and New Zealand society, and the growing evidence base which shows the importance of early learning.

There has been a rapid expansion of early learning services, in particular some forms of provision, such as home based education and care. Given this growth, it is timely to consider whether Government should play a more active role in the early learning market to match the supply and demand of early learning provision, and limit any potentially detrimental effects of competition. This includes exploring whether our approach to network planning is ensuring access to high quality learning opportunities for all children.

Early learning provision has played a crucial role in supporting labour market participation, particularly for women. The development of the Early Learning Strategic Plan will also explore how Government and the early learning sector can work together to support parents' employment aspirations in the context of the 21st century work environment.

¹ Historically, and in statute, this sector has been referred to as 'early childhood education. However, ngā kōhanga reo identify as being whānau development rather than early childhood education. Therefore the term early learning is now used, to be inclusive of both early childhood education services and ngā kōhanga reo.

The early learning curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, expresses the vision that all children grow up in New Zealand as competent and confident learners, strong in their identity, language and culture. It emphasises our bicultural foundation, our multicultural present and the shared future we are creating. It is expected that the bicultural vision of *Te Whāriki* will inform the development of the Early Learning Strategic Plan.

The Government's Education Portfolio work programme

The Government's work programme for the Education Portfolio outlines a vision for a "high quality public education system that provides all New Zealanders with learning opportunities so that they can discover and develop their full potential throughout their lives, engage fully in society, and lead rewarding and fulfilling lives."

This Government believes in an education system that brings out the very best in everyone and that means our educational offerings need to be as diverse as the learners we cater for. We need our people to be resilient, creative, and adaptable, with great communication and interpersonal skills, and prepared to work collaboratively as well as independently. This is consistent with *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum*, which is underpinned by a vision of children 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."

In order to be effective in meeting these aspirations, our education system needs to change to meet the needs of the 21st century.

The Government's work programme recognises the persistent inequities faced by Māori and Pasifika and learners with disabilities or learning support needs.

The work programme also notes that while there has been significant growth in early learning participation, this growth does not mean that all children are participating in similar amounts of early learning nor does it mean that all children have access to high quality learning opportunities.

Purpose

The purpose of the Early Learning Strategic Plan is to provide a shared vision and road map towards an early learning sector that gives all children genuine opportunities for high quality early learning and development that supports their identity, language and culture and enables them to learn and thrive.

As stated in *Pathways to the Future*, "long-lasting improvement is most readily achieved through a deliberate journey." The new Early Learning Strategic Plan should once again take a stepped approach, with the early steps laying the foundations for later action. This will help to ensure that any tensions between different goals are managed and that the building blocks for success are put in place in a considered way.

The Minister is setting up a Strategic Plan Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) to provide the Minister and the Ministry of Education with advice to inform the development of the Early Learning Strategic Plan to give effect to his vision for early learning.

Scope

In developing the Early Learning Strategic Plan, the MAG may consider any matter relating to the early learning sector, such as policies around funding, regulation and support and the curriculum.

The development process will be broad based but should explore the following key themes:

Theme	Focusing questions may include:
Raising quality	How can government and sector work together to raise the quality of early learning provision? - How can we ensure that every child accesses a rich curriculum and empowering pedagogies? - What is the best approach to developing teaching and leadership capability across the sector? - What regulatory and funding settings best support quality provision across diverse service types? - How do we build an early learning sector that enables continuity as children travel across educational settings, including school or kura? - How best is quality measured across the early learning sector? How will we know it is improving? - How do we develop and support parents and whānau understanding of what high quality services look like in order for them to advocate for their children?
Improving equity	How can government and sector work with parents and whānau to improve educational equity? - How can government ensure that all children regardless of background or learning needs access high quality early learning? - How can we foster connections with broader social sector agencies, iwi and communities to support children's well-being and ensure that they have the support they need? - How can we drive pedagogical innovation and interventions that support equity?
The role of choice	How best can the government and sector support parents and whānau understanding of high quality ECE so that they can make informed choices in their children's early learning while avoiding unnecessary duplication and quality services being undermined by competition? - How best can government manage the match between demand and supply of early learning services? - How can choice be balanced against the drive for quality and equity? - How can our sector best support te reo Māori to thrive? - How best can the early learning sector respond to the educational, cultural and language aspirations of parents and whānau? - What choices should be available to parents regarding the type, philosophy and location of early learning service they can access?

When framing its recommendations, the MAG is expected to consider both the efficiency and effectiveness of the early learning sector, and take account of the Government's objectives and its positions in relation to early learning as set out below.

Objective	Implications
Learners at the Centre	The Government is committed to placing learners at the centre of the education system with a much greater focus on personalised learning, the recognition and celebration of diversity, and a focus on learning environments that are culturally and socially responsive. In the context of early learning, this includes actively supporting the establishment of new public early childhood centres in areas of low-provision and supporting and lifting the quality of services that predominantly enrol Māori and Pacific children.
Barrier-Free Access	The Government is committed to breaking down the barriers to participation at all levels, with a particular focus on breaking down financial barriers by returning to the principle of a free public education that is available to all New Zealanders throughout their lives. In the context of early learning, this includes putting the "free" back into the policy of 20 Hours Free early learning for all three and four year olds, and those five-year-olds who aren't yet in school.
Quality Teaching	The Government is committed to championing quality teaching and the importance of a respected and supported teaching profession at all levels of the system. In the context of early learning, this includes revisiting decisions by the previous government have undermined the shift towards a more qualified workforce. Over time, the Government's aim is to achieve 100% qualified teachers in all centre-based teacher-led early learning services and to improve group size and teacher: child ratios for infants and toddlers.
Quality Inclusive Public Education	The Government is committed to investing in and backing our world-class, public education system for all students. This involves turning the tide away from a privatised, profit-focused education system. In the context of early learning, this includes working to ensure that community-based early childhood education services have well-maintained facilities and are able to expand to meet growing demand.
21st Century Learning	The Government is committed to focusing on learning that is relevant to the lives that New Zealanders are living today, the technology they will interact with, and the types of skills that will provide them with the opportunities to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

Development process

The development of the Early Learning Strategic Plan will be led by a Strategic Plan Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG). This group is not a representative group of stakeholders. Rather, it includes

a diverse range of people, with varying backgrounds and experience, who will challenge conventional thinking.

The MAG will be supported by a Strategic Plan Reference Group. This group will be made up of a wider range of representatives, including sector representatives and early learning academics. Membership of this group will include existing early learning representative groups; the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) and the ECE Policy Research Forum.

The MAG, the Reference Group and the Ministry of Education will work together to develop an Early Learning Strategic Plan that provides a shared vision and road map to give effect to the Government's vision for early learning.

Engaging stakeholders

Public consultation will be conducted in September 2018.

There will be broad engagement through face to face hui and online forums. Parents, whānau and the sector will be consulted.

Key processes and outputs

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| 1 | Focusing questions for stakeholder engagement | From April 2018, the Ministry and the MAG will identify a list of focusing questions for stakeholder engagement. |
| 2 | Education Summit and online engagement | There is the potential for the Early Learning Strategic Plan to be a topic of discussion at the Education Summits in May 2018. The focusing questions will be used to guide this discussion as well as inform any online surveys/other online engagement. |
| 3 | Draft Strategic Plan | In September, the Ministry of Education will release a draft Strategic Plan for consultation. This first draft will be informed by the advice from the Ministerial Advisory Group. The draft Plan will be tested the reference group prior to public consultation. |
| 4 | Consultation Reports | In November, the Ministry will produce a consultation report from its consultation processes which summarises what has been heard from New Zealanders about the Strategic Plan. The consultation report will provide insight (including data and statistics) into the consultation and identify key trends and significant responses to inform the final Strategic Plan. |
| 5 | Final Strategic Plan | A final Strategic Plan will be drafted by the Ministry of Education, incorporating consultation feedback. The MAG and Reference Group will be consulted on the final Strategic Plan before it is submitted to the Minister in December. |

Alignment with other ECE work programme commitments

The MAG and Reference Group will be kept informed of the sequencing and implementation of Government's wider education work programme where this work intersects with the Early Learning Strategic Plan. This includes:

- the review of home-based early childhood education
- work on Ka Hikitia
- work on the Pasifika Education Plan
- the development of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities, and
- the Education workforce strategy.

Proactively Released