New Zealand: Competencies of ECE teachers
Sub theme 2.2
Overview

- Integrated education and care since 1986
- National curriculum covering ages 0 to 5 years since 1996
- ECE services are independent of Government
- Both for-profit and non-profit or community owned services

Government’s role:
- Set policy
- Regulate quality standards
- Administer a licensing system
- Independent quality assurance of ECE services
- Funding subsidies paid to services
- Information for parents on benefits of early learning
- Broker access for parents
- Grants to establish or expand services to improve access
New Zealand has a diverse ECE provision…

**Licensed ECE services:**
- Centre-based, teacher-led
  - Kindergartens
  - Education and care centres
- Te Kōhanga Reo
- Playcentres (parent-led)
- Home-based services
- Hospital-based services
- Distance learning

**Certificated ECE services:**
- Playgroups (896)

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**Table 1: Number and percentage of licensed services by service type (2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Licensed Service</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playcentre</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Care</td>
<td>2,324</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-based</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Kōhanga Reo</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital-based</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Education &amp; Care</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>4,265</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comprehensive approach to teacher competencies

- National curriculum – covers the approach to teaching and domains of learning

- A twelve year reform initiative 2000 to 2012:
  - Rationalised diverse range of qualification courses for ECE teachers
  - Set benchmark qualification at diploma level
  - Set quality standards for teacher education courses
  - Set professional standards for teacher registration
  - Regulate 50% of staff must be qualified and registered teachers
  - Funding incentives for services to employ up to 80% teachers
  - Comprehensive teacher supply policies to lift work force qualification rate
  - Targeted professional development
  - Fund cost of qualified workforce so costs not passed on to parents
Teacher qualification and registration targets

Targets set in 2002 to lift qualification rate:
- One lead teacher in each service by 2005
- 50% by 2007
- 80% by 2010
- 100% by 2012.

- In 2010 Government changed 100% target to 80%

- The current (2012) workforce qualification rate is 71%
- 94% of services funded for 80% teachers registered

- Number of qualified and registered teachers increased substantially:
  - 4,242 in 2002
  - 15,666 in 2012.
Percentage of qualified and registered teachers
A 0-5 ECE curriculum common for all service types:

- Covers skills, competencies and learning dispositions across developmental domains

- Vision 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.”

- Initially national curriculum published but not mandated in 1996

- Framework for curriculum became a licensing requirement in 2008
… and includes robust teacher education and course accreditation...

- The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) ensures qualifications are credible, robust, and recognised nationally and internationally.

- All ECE teacher qualifications must be approved by both NZQA and the New Zealand Teacher’s Council (NZTC).

- Initial teacher education is available as full-time study, while working, by distance learning, and at undergraduate and graduate levels.

- Diploma of Teaching (ECE) or an equivalent Level 7 qualification approved by the NZTC or a 1 year graduate qualification.

- Courses must cover:
  - The New Zealand ECE curriculum
  - Working effectively in the New Zealand cultural context
  - Theories of pedagogy and teaching practice
  - Care and education of infants and toddlers
... followed by comprehensive teacher professional registration

- The New Zealand Teacher’s Council is the professional and regulatory body for registered teachers in all settings.

- Teachers must meet requirements outlining essential knowledge and capabilities required for quality teaching.

- Requirements include:
  - particular responsibility to promote equitable learning outcomes for Māori and all children
  - Five criteria that reflect commitment to professional relationships and professional values
  - Seven criteria about building a stimulating, challenging and supportive learning environment that promotes learning and success for all learners.

- When registration is approved, teachers get a practising certificate that is current for three years.

- Practicing certificates must be renewed.
.... and ongoing professional development

- ECE services required to provide professional development for teaching staff.
- The Ministry of Education funds targeted professional development
- Targeted to ECE services:
  - That independent review identify as performing poorly
  - Providing for children from Māori, Pacific or low socio-economic backgrounds
  - Providing for children under two years of age
  - In areas where we are increasing participation
- Also focus on literacy, numeracy, and responsiveness the identity, language and culture of different communities.
Lessons learnt and challenges

- Comprehensive approach to developing teacher competencies is a long-term initiative and a significant investment.

- Government met the cost of lifting workforce qualification levels so that costs would not be passed on to parents, and to maintain access.

- Raising workforce qualification levels quickly can create a shortage of teachers – must have teacher supply policies and programmes.

- Evaluation of teaching practice shows strong professional leadership is critical – cannot rely solely on a highly qualified workforce.

- Initial teacher education needs to be supported with ongoing investment in teaching practice.
Figure 1: Public expenditure on ECE, 2002-2012 (in 2012 dollars)