

# Port Ahuriri Children's Centre Education Review

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13 September 2011

To the Parents and Community of Port Ahuriri Children's Centre

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Port Ahuriri Children's Centre.

Port Ahuriri Children's Centre is one of two centres governed by the Napier Community Childcare Centre's Trust Inc. The manager supervises both centres.

The centre is purpose-built and comprises three rooms catering for different age groups. The nursery caters for infants up to two years old, the toddlers' room is for children two to three years, and the kindergarten room is for three to five years. There is consistency of teaching practice between all three rooms of the centre.

Children are warmly welcomed and there is a settled tone across the centre. Teachers' interactions with children are positive and affirming. They know the children and their families well. Teaching teams work collaboratively and communicate effectively during the course of the day.

The programme is planned following children's interests and milestones. Learning experiences change seamlessly through the day to maintain a stimulating environment for children and promote high levels of engagement. Wall displays reflect a rich and varied curriculum. Each room is well resourced, especially with books and natural materials. The rooms are spacious, offering flexibility to provide more variety in the programme, and each has an outdoor area and garden.

Children have opportunities to develop the learning dispositions and social competencies

desirable for successful transition to school.

Many of the staff are long serving. All staff are supported with numerous professional development opportunities. Management acknowledges its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi but has yet to explore ways to foster partnership with whānau of Māori children to enhance their sense of belonging.

Planned, evidence-based self review is a well established process. A greater focus on in-depth analysis of information and building teachers' evaluation skills would strengthen the process. Assessment, planning and evaluation should also continue to be strengthened to show how teachers add depth and complexity to children's learning.

During this review, ERO identified a number of earthquake hazards. Monitoring of potential hazards must be a priority.

### Future Action

ERO is likely to review the service again within three years.

When ERO has reviewed an early childhood centre we encourage management to inform their community of any follow up action they plan to take. You should talk to the management or contact person if you have any questions about this evaluation, the full ERO report or their future intentions.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the centre or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Kathleen Atkins  
National Manager Review Services  
Central Region

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

### About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

### About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve quality of education for children in early childhood centres; and

- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on outcomes for children and build on each centre's self review.

## Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on four review strands.

- Quality of Education – including the quality of the programme provided for children, the quality of the learning environment and the quality of the interactions between staff and children and how these impact on outcomes for children.
- Additional Review Priorities – other aspects of the operation of a centre, may be included in the review. ERO will not include this strand in all reviews.
- National Evaluation Topics – This strand contributes to the development of education policies and their effective implementation. The information from this strand is aggregated by ERO for its national evaluation reports. Topics for investigation are changed regularly to provide up-to-date information.
- Compliance with Legal Requirements – assurance that this centre has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

## Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of centre performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to this centre.

## Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a centre is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this centre.

## Disclaimer

Individual ERO school and early childhood centre reports are public information and may be copied or sent electronically. However, the Education Review Office can guarantee only the authenticity of original documents which have been obtained in hard copy directly from either the local ERO office or ERO Corporate Office in Wellington. Please consult your telephone book, or see the ERO web page, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>, for ERO office addresses.

# 1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

## Confirmed Education Review Report: Port Ahuriri Children's Centre

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

Port Ahuriri Children's Centre is one of two centres governed by the Napier Community Childcare Centre's Trust Inc. The manager supervises both centres.

The centre is purpose-built and comprises three rooms catering for different age groups. The nursery caters for infants up to two years old, the toddlers' room is for children two to three years, and the kindergarten room is for three to five years. There is consistency of teaching practice between all three rooms of the centre.

Children are warmly welcomed and there is a settled tone across the centre. Teachers' interactions with children are positive and affirming. They know the children and their families well. Teaching teams work collaboratively and communicate effectively during the course of the day.

The programme is planned following children's interests and milestones. Learning experiences change seamlessly through the day to maintain a stimulating environment for children and promote high levels of engagement. Wall displays reflect a rich and varied curriculum. Each room is well resourced, especially with books and natural materials. The rooms are spacious, offering flexibility to provide more variety in the programme, and each has an outdoor area and garden.

Children have opportunities to develop the learning dispositions and social competencies desirable for successful transition to school.

Many of the staff are long serving. All staff are supported with numerous professional development opportunities. Management acknowledges its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi but has yet to explore ways to foster partnership with whānau of Māori children to enhance their sense of belonging.

Planned, evidence-based self review is a well established process. A greater focus on in-depth analysis of information and building teachers' evaluation skills would strengthen the process. Assessment, planning and evaluation should also continue to be strengthened to show how teachers add depth and complexity to children's learning.

During this review, ERO identified a number of earthquake hazards. Monitoring of potential hazards must be a priority.

## Future Action

ERO is likely to review the service again within three years.

## 2 Review Priorities

### The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of Port Ahuriri Children's Centre was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the centre to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the management and staff. This discussion focused on existing information held by the centre (including self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to positive outcomes for children at Port Ahuriri Children's Centre.

All ERO education reviews in early childhood focus on the quality of education. For ERO this includes the quality of:

- the programme provided for children;
- the learning environment; and
- the interactions between children and adults.

ERO's findings in these areas are set out below.

### The Quality of Education

#### Background

The centre comprises three rooms catering for infants (aged 0 to 2 years), toddlers (aged 2 and 3 years) and kindergarten (3 to 5 years). The staff include many who are long serving. The findings below are relevant to all three rooms at the centre.

#### Areas of strength

##### Programme

The programme is planned following children's interests and dispositions, and appropriately fosters and supports children's developing independence. Learning experiences offered are child-centred, play-based, engaging and fun. Choices are changed seamlessly throughout the day. Planned group experiences enrich the programme. Play is viewed as meaningful learning.

##### Assessment for Learning

Children's learning is assessed through narrative stories that highlight their engagement in the programme and developing relationships. Stories are regularly and frequently added to

attractively-presented profile books. Some high quality examples identify the child's learning or developmental milestones, and subsequent teaching strategies to support future learning. Best examples show ongoing narratives focusing on how child interests have been responded to and clearly identify progress.

### Learning Environment

Children freely choose from a wide range of stimulating and inviting activities and resources. There is good provision of books and natural materials. Wall displays reflect a rich and varied curriculum. The three rooms are spacious, each with a separate outdoor area and garden. These spaces are well used to provide more variety in the programme.

### Interactions

Adults' interactions with children are respectful, warm, positive and affirming. Teachers know the children well in the context of their family. Children are happy, relaxed and well-settled. They demonstrate a sense of belonging. Conversations with adults are sustained. Teachers communicate and work well as collaborative teams.

### Transition

There is thoughtful and planned transition for children beginning at the centre and moving between rooms. A welcoming atmosphere is a strength of the centre.

### Self review

Regular, evidence-based self review is used to improve outcomes for children. A model is well established and followed by each of the three teams and management.

### Areas for development and review

#### Self review

The established process can be strengthened and as a result more effective by:

- establishing an evaluative question to guide the review
- ensuring all research is fully annotated
- clearly articulating conclusions and recommendations
- evaluating the impact of any changes made as a result of review.

### Assessment

Profile books containing learning stories vary in quality. Stories are descriptive with little analysis, future possibilities, or follow up, which limits the planning for future learning strategies. Developing processes for improving consistency in the quality of the learning stories, adding depth and complexity to the learning, and trying different approaches to get parent voice added to narratives would raise the quality of assessment for learning.



## 3 National Evaluation Topic

### Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole through its national reports. This information will be used as the basis for long term and systemic educational improvement.

### Partnerships with whānau of Māori children in early childhood services

As part of this review ERO evaluated the extent to which:

- this service understands and values the identity, language and culture of Māori children and their whānau, particularly when the child and whānau transition to the service;
- managers and educators have built relationships with whānau of Māori children;
- this service works in partnership with whānau of Māori children.

### Background

Seven children at the centre identify as Māori. The building was blessed by a Matua after major renovations were completed. Centre managers have knowledge of tikanga Māori and their obligations to the Treaty of Waitangi.

### Areas of strength

A welcoming tone is a strength of the centre. Teachers know the children well in the context of their families. Children have access to a wide range of books in te reo Māori. Tikanga Māori is integrated into routines. Teachers acknowledge the need to build confidence in the use of te reo Māori.

### Areas for development and review

There are no special initiatives in place to engage whānau in the education of their children. Investigating ways to increase whānau involvement in learning and managers exploring practices to sustain the increased use of te reo Māori should help to promote partnerships.

## 4 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff of Port Ahuriri Children's Centre completed an ERO and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal obligations related to:

- administration;
- health, safety and welfare;
- personnel management; and
- financial and property management.

During the review, ERO looked at the service's documentation, including policies, procedures and records of recent use of procedures. ERO also checked elements of the following areas that have a potentially high impact on outcomes for children:

- emotional safety (including behaviour management, prevention of bullying and abuse);
- physical safety (including behaviour management, sleeping and supervision practices; accidents and medication; hygiene and routines; travel and excursion policies and procedures);
- staff qualifications and organisation; and
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

During the course of the review ERO identified areas of non-compliance. In order to address these, management must:

4.1 be more vigilant about earthquake proofing, especially shelving  
[R 24(4) and 23(2) Education (ECC) Regulations, 1998]

4.2 ensure that parent permission slips show the adult-to-child ratios used for excursions  
[R27(1,2,3) Education (ECC) Regulations, 1998]

4.3 Meet Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) requirements with regard to hazard identification for staff and visitors.  
[S7-10 Health and Safety in Employment Act, 1992]

## 5 Recommendations

ERO and managers agree that:

5.1 teachers will continue to develop assessment, planning and evaluation practices, including adding greater depth and complexity to learning that will enhance outcomes for individual children

5.2 managers and staff will continue to strengthen self-review processes for the continuous improvement to teaching and learning practices.

## 6 Future Action

ERO is likely to review the service again within three years.

Kathleen Atkins  
National Manager Review Services  
Central Region

## About the Centre

Location	Napier
Ministry of Education profile number	55051
Type	Education and Care Service
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1998
Number licensed for	50 children, including up to 21 aged under 2
Roll number	74
Gender composition	Boys 49 Girls 25
Ethnic composition	New Zealand/Pākehā 64 Māori 7 Other ethnic groups 3
Review team on site	July 2011
Date of this report	13 September 2011
Previous three ERO reports	Education Review May 2008 Supplementary Review October 2005 Education Review October 2004