



Briefing report

Education Review Office (ERO): Findings in Akanuku | Assurance Reviews and Akarangi | Quality Evaluations in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Services

Date	6 April 2022
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M22-12
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
Associate Minister of Education	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the contents of this briefing. b) Note the concerns raised about the rates and patterns of non-compliance with the minimum regulatory requirements. c) Note concerns raised about learning outcomes and intentional teaching practices. d) Note what ERO is doing in response to these findings. e) Note that any questions from this briefing can be raised at the ERO Officials meeting in May 2022. f) Agree to forward this briefing to Min Hipkins in his role as Minister for Early Childhood Education. g) Note that this briefing is recommended for proactive release. 	



Attachments:

**Education Review Office (ERO):
Findings in Akanuku | Assurance
Reviews and Akarangi | Quality
Evaluations in Early Childhood
Education (ECE) Services**



Comments:

Minister's Office to complete

Noted

Seen

Approved

Referred to:

Date signed by Minister:



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Our Ref: M22-12

6 April 2022

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

Education Review Office (ERO) Findings in Akanuku | Assurance Reviews and Akarangi | Quality Evaluations in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Services

Purpose

1. To update you on ERO's findings in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Services onsite Akanuku | Assurance Reviews and Akarangi | Quality Evaluations from July 2021 to March 2022
2. To provide indications of the key areas of non-compliance in ECE that are emerging from ERO's reported findings.
3. To share with you our findings about quality in relation to outcomes for learners and Ngā Akatoro | Domains of *Te Ara Poutama- indicators of quality for early childhood services: what matters most*.

Background

4. ERO briefed you in December 2020 (M20-54) and August 2021 (M21-50) regarding our findings and concerns about the extent and nature of non-compliance with regulatory standards and associated licensing criteria in centre-based early childhood services.
5. ERO introduced Akanuku | Assurance Reviews in March 2019 and Akarangi | Quality Evaluations from 12 October 2020. We have recently started undertaking Akanuku | Assurance Reviews (Akanuku) in home-based education and care services and plans are underway to introduce Akarangi | Quality Evaluations (Akarangi) in home-based service in the second half of 2022.
6. In an Akanuku | Assurance Review report, ERO makes judgements about whether the service is meeting the four regulatory standards. Where ERO identifies non-compliance that pose unacceptable risk to children we recommend that the Ministry of Education reassess the service's licence. Where the non-compliances need to be addressed (not a risk to children) we recommend that the Ministry of Education follows up on these with the service.
7. In an Akarangi | Quality Evaluation report, ERO makes judgements about where a service is on a quality improvement continuum using *Te Ara Poutama Indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most* and the Akarangi Quality Evaluation Judgement Rubric. Judgements are made in relation to outcomes for learners and the service's learning and organisational conditions. For this analysis the

Akarangi | Quality Evaluation reports included judgements for outcomes for learners and five Ngā Akatoro | Domains related to the conditions for success identified in the service.

8. In an Akarangi | Quality Evaluation, ERO will check some compliance items early in the onsite stage. These items are checked because they have a potentially high impact on children's learning, wellbeing and health and safety. If this checking process identifies non-compliance that is an 'unacceptable risk' to children, ERO will shift the focus of the evaluation to that of an Akanuku | Assurance Review and undertake a full assessment of the regulatory standards and licensing criteria. If ERO identifies non-compliance with licensing criteria that is not an unacceptable risk to children, ERO will report this in the Akarangi | Quality Evaluation report. ERO will recommend that the Ministry follows up any non-compliance reported.

What ERO is finding: Akanuku | Assurance Reviews

9. The analysis of report findings over the last three years shows only a slight improvement in the percentage of services meeting regulatory standards from 74-76% meeting all regulatory standards in 2020 and 2021 to 80% meeting in 2022. The percentage of services with non-compliance that pose unacceptable risk increased from 8% in 2020 to 12% in both 2021 and 2022.
10. ERO analysed 165 confirmed Akanuku | Assurance Review reports. In 80% of the reports, services were meeting regulatory standards. However, at the time ERO was onsite in services, only 42% were meeting the regulatory standards. Of the remaining 58% just over a third had addressed non-compliances by the time their report was confirmed. This indicates that once non-compliances are identified by ERO, many services are responding quickly to address these.
11. Twenty percent services were not meeting all or some of the regulatory standards as reported in their confirmed reports. Of these:
 - 8% had non-compliance must be addressed.
 - 12% had had non-compliance that was unacceptable risk.
12. An analysis of the 792 non-compliances identified while the ERO team was onsite highlights health and safety as the standard where the most non-compliance with licensing criteria was found.
 - Curriculum Standard: 28 non-compliances.
 - Premises and Facilities Standard: 131 non-compliances.
 - Health and Safety Standard: 478 non-compliances.
 - Governance, Management and Administration Standard: 155 non-compliances.
13. The most frequent non compliances related to:
 - Lack of secured heavy furniture, fixtures, and equipment (HS6).
 - Written emergency plans, supplies and evaluation procedures (HS7).
 - Carrying out relevant emergency drills on an at least three-monthly basis (HS8).
 - Sleep monitoring (HS9).
 - Daily hazard checking, analysis of accident/incident records to identify hazards and eliminating, isolating, or minimising hazards (HS12).
 - Excursion management (HS17).
 - Accessing immediate medical assistance and notifying parents (HS27).
 - Safety checking (GMA7A).

14. These rates and patterns of non-compliance with the minimum regulatory requirements across services continues to be a concern, particularly the non-compliances that pose a significant risk to children’s safety and wellbeing.

What ERO is finding: Akarangi | Quality Evaluations

15. ERO analysed 223 confirmed Akarangi | Quality Evaluation reports. An overview of the reported judgements about quality are shown in the following table.

Judgements Based on Judgement rubric	Outcome Indicators	PROCESS INDICATORS				
		LEARNING CONDITIONS		ORGANISATIONAL CONDITIONS		
	What the service knows about outcomes for learners	He Whāriki Motuhake The learner and their learning	Whakangungu Ngalo Collaborative professional learning builds knowledge and capability	Ngā Aronga Whai Hua Evaluation for Improvement	Kaihautū Leaders foster collaboration and improvement	Te Whakaruruhau Stewardship through effective governance and management
Whakatō Emerging	4% (10)	3% (6)	4% (8)	8% (18)	4% (9)	4% (9)
Whāngai Establishing	28% (63)	24% (53)	19% (41)	26% (58)	19% (43)	20% (44)
Whakaū Embedding	44% (98)	46% (104)	45% (101)	49% (109)	43% (96)	51% (114)
Whakawhanake Sustaining	20% (45)	25% (55)	31% (70)	17% (37)	31% (68)	24% (53)
Kia rangatira ai te tipu Excelling	3% (7)	2% (5)	1% (3)	<1% (1)	3% (7)	1% (3)
Total	223	223	223	223	223	223

16. The distribution of judgements largely reflects a ‘normal distribution curve’ and provides useful baseline data for monitoring shifts in the sector going forward.
17. It is of concern that a third of services are at an early stage of using the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki* and in developing the conditions to effectively support children’s learning. The absence of a strong focus on intentional teaching practices supporting child learning and development, means that as a system we are failing to realise the benefits of high quality early childhood education for all children.
18. During the onsite phase of the evaluation, we identified non-compliance with regulatory standards and associated licensing criteria in 32% of the 223 services. By the time the reports were confirmed this had dropped to 6%. Six percent addressed non-compliances during the onsite phase and 20% addressed actions for compliance since the onsite phase. Six percent still had outstanding actions for compliance in their report, with six of these also having addressed some, but not all, of the actions for compliance in the report.
19. The nature of the non-compliance with licensing criteria is similar to what we are also seeing in Akanuku | Assurance Review reports. The main areas of non-compliance in the Akarangi | Quality Evaluation reports related to sleep monitoring (HS9), hazard checking (HS12), excursions (HS17), administration of medicine (HS28) and safety checking (GMA7A).

What ERO is doing in response

20. We met with our external ECE stakeholder group on 29 March 2022 and shared the high-level findings from this analysis. The response was positive, with sector representatives and organisations keen to work with ERO and the Ministry of Education to disseminate the findings and address the concerns.
21. ERO will write to the sector to share these findings, alerting services to the common areas of non-compliance and asking them to proactively check their systems against

their regulatory requirements to be assured that they are meeting their licensing requirements.

22. ERO will also use the findings from the analysis of report findings to identify where we need to focus our professional learning and make improvements to practice.
23. This information will also be shared with the Ministry as there are specific groups of services who continue to dominate those that struggle to comply with their legislative and licencing obligations. A number of these services have been the recipients of substantial support in the past. This would suggest that while interventions may have worked in the short-term (returning services from provisional to full licence status), these interventions have not achieved sustainable improvement. The analysis presented here provide some pointers regarding where existing resources (such as those provided for through SELO contracts) need to be focussed. Given that many of these services are operated as standalone services it also suggests that structural solutions may be required in order to strengthen the resilience and sustained performance of such providers. We would see this as a key focus in the Ministry's network planning considerations.

Recommendations

24. It is recommended that you:

- a) **Note** the contents of this briefing. **Noted**
- b) **Note** the concerns raised about the rates and patterns of non-compliance with the minimum regulatory requirements. **Noted**
- c) **Note** concerns raised about learning outcomes and intentional teaching practices. **Noted**
- d) **Note** what ERO is doing in response to these findings. **Noted**
- e) **Note** that any questions from this briefing can be raised at the ERO Officials meeting in May 2022. **Noted**
- f) **Agree** to forward this briefing to Min Hipkins in his role as Minister for Early Childhood Education. **Agreed** ~~Disagreed~~
- g) **Note** that this briefing is recommended for proactive release. **Noted**


Nicholas Pole
Chief Executive

NOTED/APPROVED


Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

06 / 04 / 2022