



A guide to learning in a Covid-19 world:

# Supporting parents into 2021

We know that Covid-19 has had a huge impact on you, your child, and their school or early learning service. In 2020, schools and services had to close, and teaching and learning moved from the classroom to the dining room tables of children and teachers. Covid-19 created a completely new set of challenges for your children's learning.

Last year was tough and you had to go above and beyond to meet the needs of your children's learning. With this being said, the impacts of Covid-19 are likely to still be felt by your children as they move into 2021 – and ERO would like to help you to support your children during this difficult time.

To do this, ERO talked to a wide range of early learning services, schools, students, teachers, principals, board chairs and whānau – to find out about the challenges schools and services had to overcome in responding to Covid-19 and the lessons learnt in supporting learners and their whānau.

From talking to everyone, we have produced a set of in-depth reports on the impact of Covid-19. This short guide for parents, carers and whānau draws from these reports to help you:

- understand the impact of Covid-19 on learners throughout New Zealand
- identify some practical actions to help you continue to support your child as you move into the new school year.

We hope you find this summary useful to reflect how far you have come in responding to Covid-19 and what further support your child may need in 2021.

## What we found from talking to schools and early childhood services in 2020 about the impact of Covid-19

The key findings from our *Learning in Covid-19 World* reports are set out below which you may find interesting.

Despite everyone being really busy last year responding to Covid-19, we are really grateful for the time given to us by students, whānau, service leaders, teachers, principals and school boards.

Their experiences and insights are at the heart of what we have learnt. You can find the full reports on the impact of Covid-19 on schools and

services, along with a short summary of the findings, on ERO's website.

### What we learnt about school students

Your child may still be feeling anxious about Covid-19, particularly if you live in Auckland.

- Just over half of students were feeling safe from Covid-19 after the lockdown last year.
- Auckland secondary students were more anxious than secondary students outside of Auckland, following the second lockdown in Auckland.

Covid-19 and the disruption caused by the lockdowns may have had an impact on your child's attendance at school.

- Around half of schools were concerned about student attendance when we spoke to them in 2020.

It is likely that your child's learning has been impacted because of the disruptions caused by Covid-19, particularly if your child is doing NCEA this year.

- Sixty-six percent of primary aged students (years 4-8) told us, in Term 3 last year, they were able to keep up with their learning post-lockdown.
- However, nearly a quarter of NCEA students disagree that they were keeping up with their learning.
- Fifty-nine percent of schools reported having concerns about student progress and achievement.

See Part 1 of the *Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Schools* report for more information about the impact of Covid-19 on student wellbeing, engagement and learning.

The impacts of Covid-19 were felt differently by different students and inequities in the education system could have increased.

- Both Māori and Pacific students were more likely to say a parent had become more interested in their learning.

- Schools in lower socio-economic areas (low decile schools) had more concerns about student achievement and attendance.
- Auckland teachers and principals were more concerned about student engagement.

See Part 2 of the *Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Schools* report for more information about the impact of Covid-19 on particular groups of students.

### What we learnt about early childhood education

Services went above and beyond in supporting children, staff and whānau.

- Eighty-four percent of services reported having regular contact with parents, whānau and children over the lockdown. Many services tailored the way they communicated to best suit the needs of whānau.
- A fifth of services said they actively supported their vulnerable families by providing emotional support and assisting in the provision of food.

Learning remotely is possible for young children if you connect with their parents and whānau.

- Nine out of ten services said they were able to provide some form of teaching and learning for children during lockdown.
- A third of services reported that the increased interaction with parents and whānau supported children's learning.
- But it is harder for children and whānau who have limited access to digital tools.

Some whānau remain anxious and not all children have returned to early childhood education.

- In more than a quarter of services, whānau were nervous for their children to return to onsite education and care.

See Part 1 of the *Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Early Childhood Education* report for more information about the impact of Covid-19 on children, whānau and services.

### What do we suggest you can do to continue to support your child this year?

As tamariki return to school and services in 2021, here are some actions you could take to continue to support your children and their school.

1. *Support the wellbeing of your child* – keeping an eye on your child's wellbeing and the letting their school or service know now if you have any concerns.
2. *Support your child to keep engaged with their school or service* – making sure your child attends their school or service and talking to them if you have any concerns about your child not enjoying learning.
3. *Support your child's learning* – being aware that your child's learning progress may not be where it would have been in previous years because of Covid-19, talking to your child's school or service about any gaps in your child's learning and working with them to develop a plan to address your child's needs.
4. *Support your child's teachers and kaiako* – recognising that Covid-19 has been stressful and difficult to deal with, including for your child's teachers and kaiako.
5. *Be prepared for future lockdowns* – making sure your child's school or service has your contact details in case of an emergency and talking to your school or service if you have any concerns about your child learning from home or difficulties in accessing or using digital technologies.

See Part 4 in the *Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Schools* report and Part 3 in the *Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Early Childhood Education* report for more information about the key lessons for supporting tamariki going forward.

### Where else can you go for help?

- [Ministry of Education COVID-19 Information and Advice](#)
- [New Zealand Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [Healthy Active Learning](#)
- [SPARKLERS resource hub](#)
- [Nathan Wallis resource hub](#)
- [Student wellbeing – Education in New Zealand](#)