



FOOD, NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS AND EARLY LEARNING SERVICES

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

March 2017

Food, nutrition and physical activity in New Zealand schools and early learning services: Effective practice

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Overview

In June 2015 the Cabinet Strategy Committee invited the Minister of Health, in consultation with other Ministers, to report back to the Cabinet Social Policy Committee with recommendations on a proposed package of initiatives relating to childhood obesity.¹

The resulting Cabinet Paper noted that the Education Review Office would produce a national report assessing 'the current status of food, nutrition, and physical activity in schools and early childhood services', and would also report on findings about those Health Promoting Schools (HPS) included in the evaluation sample.

ERO gathered information about 202 early learning services during their regular education reviews during Term 1, 2016. A further 46 primary schools and 29 secondary schools were reviewed with an evaluative focus on food, nutrition and physical activity. Primary schools were visited during Term 1, 2016. Secondary schools were visited during Term 2, 2016. Further information about how the schools were selected is in Appendix 1.

In each school and service, ERO asked:

How well does the service/school promote positive attitudes to physical activity and food and nutrition to benefit children?

This report gives examples of effective practice for supporting children and young people's learning about food, nutrition and physical activity. It includes examples of common challenges faced by services and schools, and ways leaders and teachers have found to respond to these challenges.

This report complements ERO's *Food, nutrition and physical activity in New Zealand schools and early learning services: Findings report*. The findings report is available online, and provides an overview of the findings and the characteristics that supported schools and services to do well.

ERO found that most schools and services were doing a good job of equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make healthy choices around food, nutrition and physical activity.

Young people told ERO that even though they knew what to do, they were not always able to make these healthy choices. Environmental and financial constraints limited their ability to participate in physical activity. They were restricted in their ability to make healthy nutritional choices by the food that was available to them, either as a result of what was affordable, or what their parents chose to provide.

Schools and early learning services can teach children and young people to value healthy food, nutrition and physical activity. To effectively change behaviour, parents, whānau, local government and the wider community needs to work together to support children and young people with opportunities to make the best choices for their health and wellbeing.

¹ Cabinet Paper to Cabinet Social Policy Committee – Office of the Minister of Health [HR 20151468] October 2015.

Introduction

Obesity and more specifically, childhood obesity, is a concern of governments and other organisations internationally. One-third of New Zealand children are either overweight or obese. The issue of obesity is especially significant for Māori and Pacific children, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.² Māori and Pacific children are more likely to be overweight or obese, but researchers found these differences disappeared when they accounted for socio-economic status.³ Māori and Pacific children are more likely to live in low income households than children of other ethnicities.⁴

The environment a person lives in, and the way their bodies and behaviour respond to that environment determines whether or not they will become obese. Parents can increase the risk of obesity to their children through genetics and the environmental conditions before and during pregnancy. As they grow, children experience environments that include cheap, readily available foods that are high in energy and low in nutrients. They are less physically active, both for transport and play, than in the past. These factors influence whether the child becomes obese or not.⁵

Activity in children aged 0-5 years promotes healthy development, and reduces the risk of them becoming overweight or obese.⁶ The food, nutrition and physical activity (F, N and PA) attitudes and behaviours children develop while young persist into adulthood⁷ so it is important to establish healthy habits when children are young.

Physical activity

Physical activity includes all the movements people make in everyday life, including work, recreation, exercise and sporting activities.* Physical activity can provide a context for learning, or contribute to an outcome, such as developing specific motor skills.

*Sport NZ (2014). *Primary school resources*. Retrieved 04.08.16 from www.sportnz.org.nz/managing-sport/search-for-a-resource/guides/primary-school-resources

- 2 Ministry of Health. Obesity data and stats. Retrieved (21.06.16) from www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets/obesity-data-and-stats
- 3 Duncan, J. S., Schofield, G., Duncan, E. K., Rush, E. C. (2008). Risk factors for excess body fatness in New Zealand children. *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 17 (1), p. 138-147.
- 4 Māori and Pacific children are also at a higher risk of persistent deprivation, and to experience severe poverty. Carter, K. and Gunasekara, F. I. (2012). *Dynamics of income in children in New Zealand, 2002-2009: A descriptive analysis of the Survey of Family, Income and Employment (SoFIE)*. Public Health Monograph Series, 28. Retrieved (25.08.16) from www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/otago036608.pdf
- 5 World Health Organization (2016). Report of the commission on ending childhood obesity. Available from apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/204176/1/9789241510066_eng.pdf?ua=1

- 6 Oliver, M., Schofield, G. M., Schluter, P. J. (2010). Parent influences on preschoolers' objectively assessed physical activity. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 13. p. 403-409.
- 7 Waters E., Swinburn B., Seidell J. & Jauy R. (eds) (2010). *Preventing Childhood Obesity*. London: Blackwell Publishing. p79.

Young children who are overweight are five times more likely to be overweight at 12 years of age.⁸ The most consistent predictors of childhood obesity are:

- > low levels of physical activity
- > unhealthy diet
- > not enough sleep
- > not eating breakfast.⁹

The recent World Health Organisation (WHO) report on Childhood Obesity,¹⁰ points out the need for a cross-sectoral approach to improving population health and health equity. Using the compulsory school years to drive and embed nutritional education is one important way of doing this. The report also notes the need for inclusive physical education.¹¹ It states that interventions for children in early learning services support healthy behaviours and weight trajectories, and these interventions are most effective when they include caregivers and the wider community.

Young people's physical literacy is developed by their experience of high quality health and physical education, physical activity and sport. This physical literacy gives them *the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding*¹² they need to value participating in physical activity and sport across their life.

Young people spend approximately one-third of their waking hours at school during term time, and sometimes even more than this in early learning services. The education sector therefore has a key role to play in implementing a curriculum that develops the nutritional¹³ and physical literacy of children and young people.



- 8 Lucas, P., & Schofield, G. M. (2009). Physical activity in the early childhood education centre environment. *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education Journal*, 12, 125-136.
- 9 Duncan, J. S., Schofield, G., Duncan, E. K., Rush, E. C. (2008). Risk factors for excess body fatness in New Zealand children. *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 17 (1), p. 138-147.
- 10 World Health Organization (2016). *Report of the commission on ending childhood obesity*. Available from apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/204176/1/9789241510066_eng.pdf?ua=1
- 11 Inclusive physical education provides opportunities for all students, of all abilities, rather than focused on the potential elite sportsperson. See World Health Organization (2016). *Report of the commission on ending childhood obesity*, p31. Available from apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/204176/1/9789241510066_eng.pdf?ua=1

- 12 Whitehead, M. (2013) cited in Sport New Zealand (2015). *Sport New Zealand's Physical Literacy Approach: Guidance for quality physical activity and sport experiences*. Available from www.sportnz.org.nz/about-us/who-we-are/what-were-working-towards/physical-literacy-approach/
- 13 Nutritional literacy is a person's ability to obtain, process and understand basic nutritional information. This literacy helps protect against risk factors such as socio-economic disadvantage, food insecurity, nutritional status and body weight. Zoellner, J., Connell, C., Bounds, W., Crook, LaS., & Yadrick, K. (2009). Nutrition literacy status and preferred nutrition communication channels among adults in the Lower Mississippi Delta. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 6, (4). Retrieved 7 December 2015 from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2774642/

Physical activity has been linked with improved educational outcomes for students.¹⁴ Students that are more physically active and have higher fitness levels tend to spend more time on-task and have higher levels of achievement. In New Zealand, Sport in Education¹⁵ resulted in increased attendance, higher student engagement and improved assessment results for secondary school students.¹⁶

Similarly, evidence links good nutrition with improvements in both short and long-term educational outcomes.¹⁷ If children and young people do not have an adequate intake of micronutrients, for example due to a high energy but low-nutrient diet, their brains do not function optimally.¹⁸ Further evidence shows that children who eat breakfast have improved test scores, and fewer days away from school.¹⁹

Clear food policies and good education about nutrition can improve at-risk children's nutritional status, help them build healthy eating habits, and learn skills to support their decision making throughout their lives.²⁰

Sport

Sport can be informal or formal, competitive or non-competitive forms of active recreation.* It includes both new and established forms of active recreation, and can be used as a context for learning within *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

*Sport NZ (2015). *Community Sport Strategy 2015-20*. Retrieved 04.08.16 from www.sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/attachments/About-us/Com-Sport-Strategic-Plan.pdf



- 14 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014). *Health and academic achievement*. Available from www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf
- 15 Sport in Education is a Sport NZ project that supports schools to deliver the curriculum through the context of sport. It is currently being developed, trialled and evaluated in eight secondary schools. It will be made available to all schools. More information can be found at www.sportnz.org.nz/managing-sport/search-for-a-resource/programmes-and-projects/sport-in-education-project
- 16 NZCER (2015). *Getting runs on the board: Stories of successful practice from two years of the Sport in Education initiative*. Retrieved 04.08.16 from www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/SiE-Getting-Runs-on-the-Board.pdf
- 17 Ball, J., Watts, C., & Quigley, R. (2005). *A rapid review of the literature on the association between nutrition and school pupil performance*. Wellington: Obesity Action Coalition.
- 18 Benton, D. (2001) cited in Ball, J., Watts, C., & Quigley, R. (2005). *A rapid review of the literature on the association between nutrition and school pupil performance*. Wellington: Obesity Action Coalition.
- 19 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014). *Health and academic achievement*. Available from www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf

- 20 Ball, J., Watts, C., & Quigley, R. (2005). *A rapid review of the literature on the association between nutrition and school pupil performance*. Wellington: Obesity Action Coalition.

The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs)²¹ set out expectations for school administration. The NAGs state the boards of trustees must:

- > give priority to regular quality physical activity that develops movement skills for all students, especially in Years 1 to 6 (NAG 1 (a)iii)
- > provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students (NAG 5a)
- > promote healthy food and nutrition for all students. (NAG 5b)

Both *Te Whāriki* and *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) set out an expectation that children should learn about health and physical activity.

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) says physically active play supports learning across all strands of *Te Whāriki*. In particular, the Wellbeing (*Mana Atua*) and *Exploration (Mana Aotūroa)*²² strands have learning outcomes relating to children learning how to control their bodies and keep themselves healthy. The Ministry have advice and ideas for supporting and providing for physically active play, and explain the kinds of learning that can occur through play.²³

Health and Physical Education is a learning area of the NZC.²⁴ This learning area is broken into three subjects; health, home economics and physical education. It includes food and nutrition, and physical activity as two key areas of learning. Managing self, an important part of managing health, is one of the key competencies of the NZC.

Physical education (NZC)

Physical education is learning about “movement and its contribution to the development of individuals and communities. By learning in, through, and about movement, students gain an understanding that movement is integral to human expression and that it can contribute to people’s pleasure and enhance their lives. They learn to understand, appreciate, and move their bodies, relate positively to others, and demonstrate constructive attitudes and values. This learning takes place as they engage in play, games, sport, exercise, recreation, adventure, and expressive movement in diverse physical and social environments. Physical education encourages students to engage in movement experiences that promote and support the development of physical and social skills. It fosters critical thinking and action and enables students to understand the role and significance of physical activity for individuals and society.”*

* Ministry of Education (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1-13*. (p. 23). Retrieved from nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum

21 See www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/legislation/nags/

22 Ministry of Education (1996). *Te Whāriki, He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mojopuna o Aotearoa, Early Childhood Curriculum*. (p.48, 86). Retrieved from www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/ece-curriculum/te-whariki/

23 Ministry of Education (2015). *Play idea: Physically active play – Korikori*. Retrieved 30 November 2015, from <http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/learning-tools-and-resources/play-ideas/physically-active-play-korikori/>

24 Ministry of Education (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1-13*. Retrieved from nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum

Learning about food and nutrition, and physical activity may also occur in other areas of the curriculum. For example, students may learn about nutrition in science, and about factors influencing involvement in physical activity in social sciences.

ERO's *School Evaluation Indicators*²⁵ give a holistic view of desired outcomes for children and young people. One of these outcomes is for students to be physically active and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Previous ERO evaluations have included information around how schools and early learning services developed children and young people's knowledge and appreciation of health and physical activity. The findings of these reports are summarised in Appendix 2.



25 ERO (2016). *School evaluation indicators: Effective practice for improvement and learner success*. Available from www.ero.govt.nz/publications/school-evaluation-indicators

What ERO found

ERO made a judgement about how well each school or service promoted positive attitudes to F, N and PA, from very well to not well at all. The effective practice statements ERO used to make this judgement are found in each section of this report.

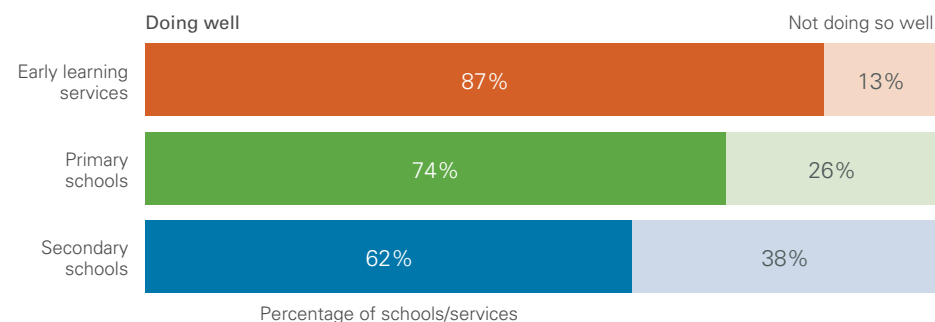
Following a summary of the overall findings, this report is divided into three main sections. Each section begins with the questions ERO asked and the effective practice statements used for making a decision about how well each school or service was doing, followed by what ERO found in schools and services that were doing very well. The sections include quotes,²⁶ challenges and examples of good practice. The sections cover the following aspects:

- > planning and implementation
 - vision and values
 - leaders' and teachers' actions
 - environment
 - internal evaluation
- > young people's learning and participation
 - knowing and valuing
 - participating
 - decision making
- > whānau and community involvement.

Leaders and teachers may find it useful to consider the questions and the effective practice statements throughout the report when evaluating how their school or service promotes positive attitudes to F, N and PA.²⁷

Information about the schools and services in this evaluation can be found in Appendix 3.

Figure 1: The older the students, the less well food, nutrition and physical activity was promoted



²⁶ Quotes throughout this report are from leaders, teachers and young people at a range of services and schools. They were selected as being examples of comments made at the schools and services ERO visited.

²⁷ Another useful resource for considering how schools promote wellbeing is ERO (2016). *Wellbeing for success: A resource for schools*. Available from <http://www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Wellbeing-resource-WEB.pdf>

Summary of overall findings

Early learning services

Nearly nine out of ten services were doing well or very well at promoting children's positive attitudes to F, N and PA. Leaders and teachers in these services recognised and valued the importance of F, N and PA for children's wellbeing and learning.

This recognition and valuing underpinned the way the service operated at all levels. Leaders, teachers, parents, whānau and children all understood the importance of F, N and PA and acted in ways that promoted children's knowledge and participation.

Leaders and teachers were knowledgeable and capable in the area of F, N and PA. They were strategic and proactive in their decision making, and the environment and resourcing supported children's learning in this area.

Teachers modelled healthy choices and ensured that the messages children received were consistent across adults, and across children's age groups in the service. Teachers worked well with children's parents and the community to support children's learning. Children developed leadership skills, and had opportunities to make decisions about physical health in their learning programme.

Services that were part of an umbrella organisation had clear direction, expectations and support for teachers and parents around food, nutrition and physical activity which supported many of these services to do well.

Primary schools

Primary schools that were doing well were thorough in their planning and implementation. Nearly three-quarters of the primary schools in this evaluation were doing well or very well at promoting positive attitudes to F, N and PA.

These schools were guided by sound policies and procedures, founded on a clear vision for students' success. There was a focus on holistic wellbeing, and students' enjoyment of activity was valued. This meant there was a high level of consistency across the school in the messages students were receiving about F, N and PA. Teachers modelled healthy choices, and showed their enjoyment in being active.

The curriculum in these schools also recognised the focus on, and valuing of, students' holistic wellbeing. Teachers were responsive to students' interests and needs, and planned well for students' learning about F, N and PA. All students were included in activities, and teachers found ways to respond to children's physical and cultural differences.

Leaders were proactive and strategic. They had high expectations for teachers and students, and acted to support them to meet these expectations. They knew teachers' needs, and accessed professional learning and development (PLD) that matched their areas of need. They used research and school data to review and evaluate for improvement. They made strategic resourcing decisions around programmes, equipment and facilities, and were focused on finding solutions.

Leaders and teachers encouraged and supported parents to be engaged in their children's education and school activities, for example by providing training on how to coach or manage a sports team.

Secondary schools

Just under two-thirds of secondary schools in this evaluation were doing well or very well at promoting positive attitudes to F, N and PA.

Passionate leadership and a clear vision for student wellbeing drove coherent and well planned programmes across the schools that were doing well. Decisions around what was done, and how it was done were guided by achievement, participation and survey data.

These schools actively involved students in decision making, and expected that parents and the school would work together to promote students' wellbeing.

Schools that were doing very well reviewed the options for food in their school canteen. They reduced or removed the unhealthy options, especially those high in sugar. In some schools, the board of trustees subsidised the canteen in order to promote healthier food choices and keep the canteen viable. School leaders recognised that 'managing self' is one of the key competencies of NZC, and so preferred to inform and guide students, rather than enforce rigid rules.

Organised sport was the main way that students were active in secondary schools. In schools that were doing well at promoting positive attitudes, participating was seen as important, not just competing. Teachers knew who was active and who was not, and took steps to encourage everyone to be active. They provided a variety of ways for students to be active.

What were schools and services that were very good at promoting positive attitudes to food, nutrition and physical activity doing?

Planning and implementation

ERO asked “How well are food, nutrition and physical activity programmes planned and implemented?”

- > How are positive attitudes to food, nutrition and physical activity promoted in ECE Management/Board/leaders’ actions?
- > How does the curriculum respond to, and promote, positive attitudes to food, nutrition and physical activity?
- > How are teachers supported to have the professional capability to promote positive attitudes to food, nutrition and physical activity?
- > How does the service/school environment promote positive attitudes to food, nutrition and physical activity?

Values and vision

ERO's effective practice statements for values and vision:

Leaders recognise that physical activity, food and nutrition are important to children’s holistic development.

The school/service community has identified that health and wellbeing influence educational and social outcomes and vice versa.

Leaders and teachers recognise and value children’s social and cultural perspectives.

Leaders and teachers recognise that physical play is a worthwhile activity for children.

Leaders and teachers emphasise fun, participation (e.g. sportsmanship and fair play) and skill development over competition.

Policies and planning include health and wellbeing actions.

Schools and services that were doing very well at promoting positive attitudes to F, N and PA valued and focused on children and young people's holistic wellbeing or *hauora*. They saw that wellbeing was necessary for learning, and that play and physical activity were a vehicle for learning. Leaders and teachers understood that one way to support children and young people to experience wellbeing was to help them develop their understanding and attitudes towards physical health. These schools and services often also valued environmental sustainability and restorative practices as ways to explore healthy foods and ways of interacting, which helped foster children and young people's wellbeing.

These values were evident in policies, plans, guidelines and practice. Leaders developed policies informed by research or expert groups, and input from staff, parents and their community. These policies and guidelines clearly outlined expectations for practice, such as fruit being the only option for snacks. The clarity and explicitness meant teachers, leaders and parents had a shared understanding of what was expected, based on the values, policies and plans.

The explicitness of policies and plans, and teachers' shared understanding and valuing of wellbeing meant practices were consistent across the school or service. Young people received the same messages from all adults.

Hauora

Hauora is a Māori philosophy of wellbeing that is often described by the model '*Te Whare Tapa Wha*'*

In this model, four dimensions of wellbeing are represented by the four walls of a *wharenuī*, or meeting house. Each wall symbolises the elements necessary to sustain *hauora* or health and wellbeing. These dimensions or elements are *taha hinengaro*, *taha wairua*, *taha tinana*, and *taha whānau*.

Taha hinengaro focuses on mental health and emotions. *Taha wairua* focuses on spiritual health. *Taha tinana* focuses on physical health and *taha whānau* focuses on the epicentre of one's wellbeing: *whānau*. Each dimension influences and supports the others.

*Durie, M.1994. *Whaiora, Māori Health Development*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Leaders and teachers believed physical activity and participating in sport increased young people's motivation and engagement in learning, and this was evident in their actions.

Participation, fun, risk-taking and 'giving things a go' were encouraged more than competition.

The importance of the values and vision was clear

A principal said:

The skills, understanding and motivation required to live a healthy lifestyle are inherent in the school culture from staff through to parents and students. We build on the attitudes and beliefs that children have about their health and then use these to develop further skills and understandings which the children can practise.

Young people said:

We are the next generation and the current adults will be gone and we will be the leaders and running New Zealand so we need to be fit, well and healthy.

There are competitive and non-competitive events. You don't have to be competitive to be healthy.

We are still growing up and we need to teach the ones coming on next.

If you didn't have hauora you wouldn't be yourself.

The school seems very concerned about looking after our emotional health and wellbeing, but don't realise how connected [it is] to our physical health and what we put in our bodies.



Examples of practice: bringing the values and vision to life

Early learning service

At this Playcentre, leaders are careful to ensure that all adults have a shared understanding and commitment to promoting children's health and wellbeing.

Their induction process is well thought out, and supports adults to understand what the expectations are at the service. Adults are provided with information about food, nutrition and physical activity, then the centre policies are introduced and explained.

Training programmes for adults also promote food, nutrition and physical activity.

Adults share publications, recipes, ideas and activities for promoting food, nutrition and physical activity. Expectations for practice are stated clearly, and displayed throughout the service. For example, adults are expected to promote healthy food options, and role model healthy eating.

Leaders make sure that food, nutrition and physical activity policies are up to date and implemented. Once a term, all the adults have a meeting where they review the policies and brainstorm ideas. This helps ensure that all the adults understand what to do, and that policies are responsive and inclusive of all the children in the service.

Primary school (HPS)

This school has *hauora* as an essential element of its learner profile. The principal strongly encourages this, as she knows the school's whānau understand and relate to it.

Hauora is woven throughout the school – policies, priorities, curriculum design, timetabling, resourcing and professional practice.

The school leaders work with people in the community to develop initiatives and resources that support the *hauora* of the students and their families. For example, the principal worked with the council and a local trust to develop a bike track in the school grounds. They purchased 50 bikes, so all students had opportunities to learn and practise their cycling, and have fun. Coordinators teach bike riding and safety skills and look after the bikes, so that everyone can have a turn.

Leaders expect that physical education should be fun, regular and relevant to the students. They support teachers to do this through resourcing and PLD.

Teachers offer students activities such as dance, waka ama and surfing, as well as fundamental movement skills. They see this as the way to support students to value physical activity.

The board of trustees is committed to students' *hauora*. They have strategic goals for this, and the principal reports on progress towards these goals. The board ensures policies have detailed expectations to guide practice, and that leaders' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Performance management is aligned to the strategic goals. For example, some teachers will be appraised against their progress towards developing the confidence to teach physical education skills, *not just having kids running around the field*.

Secondary school

Student wellbeing is a clear focus in this school, and this is demonstrated in its values of Participation, Respect, Inquiry, Diversity and Environment.

The school is part of a Sport NZ initiative to engage students in learning and achievement through sport. Teachers conducted an inquiry into the effects of students' learning through sport, and found that the initiative had a positive impact on students' learning and attitudes to learning.

This knowledge, combined with the school values, means teachers are proactive in ensuring all students have opportunities to participate in physical activity. As a result, they have seen a large increase in the number of students participating in sport.

They support participation by:

- > regularly making the school gym available to students
- > making sure students know how to find out about the sporting opportunities available
- > having social teams alongside competitive teams, for students that do not have the time to train for a competitive team
- > supporting students with fees and equipment
- > regularly surveying students about their participation, and refining opportunities based on this feedback
- > training senior students as sports coaches for junior teams
- > holding fun events, such as a mini Olympics.

Leaders' and teachers' actions

ERO's effective practice statements for leaders' and teachers' actions:

Leaders and teachers include children in developing expectations of behaviour, and model these expectations.

Leaders and teachers create an environment where all children are included and equally accepted.

Teachers have expectations that children will treat each other with respect and fairness.

Leaders and teachers encourage children to be physically active on a regular basis; either on their own, with friends or with whānau.

Teachers respect children's rights to be informed and/or consulted about decisions that affect them.

Leaders support ongoing PLD in the area of physical activity, food and nutrition for teachers according to their specific needs.

Leaders and teachers are familiar with developmental ages and stages, and provide comfortable, safe spaces appropriate to children's developmental needs; in particular, for developing foundational physical skills.

Leaders and teachers provide opportunities for all children to be involved in sports through modifications that make it safe to play and yet still challenging for participants.

Teachers support children to develop a wide range of physical activity skills that lead to increased mastery, self-confidence and competence.

Physical activity, food and nutrition in the curriculum promote children's wellbeing beyond the classroom.

Leaders and teachers had a clear understanding of the importance of F, N and PA for learning and wellbeing. They modelled positive attitudes, and showed their enjoyment of healthy eating and activity. They participated in games with and against students, ensuring these activities were fun.

Leaders supported staff to share consistent messages and made sure staff were able to access professional learning and development (PLD) programmes that built on their skills. They modelled their expectations and were strategic and deliberate in their decision making.

Many schools and services used external facilitators to support their physical education curriculum delivery. These facilitators provided programmes that focused on sports' skills development and the social aspects of working in a team. Leaders in schools and services that were doing very well expected teachers would take what they learnt from these facilitators and use this in their own lesson delivery. Curriculum leaders supported teachers to do this, and for some, this was an aspect of their appraisal.

Teachers integrated opportunities to learn about F, N and PA into other areas of the curriculum. For example, children in one service were interested in how colours changed when blended together. Their teachers thought about ways to explore this interest, as well as promote positive attitudes to nutrition. They decided to blend different coloured fruits and vegetables together into healthy smoothies. This gave them an opportunity to talk about healthy food choices, as well as explore the children's interest in colour blending.

Programmes where children grew their own food were especially common in services. These were opportunities for children to learn a wide variety of skills, and develop their understanding of fruit and vegetables and their impact on health. Children were involved in deciding what to plant, nurturing the plants, harvesting, preparing and eating the produce. Teachers talked to children about 'growing food' as food that is grown, and helps children to grow. Teachers noticed children were much more willing to try new foods if it was something they had helped grow and prepare.

Teachers knew young people's interests, strengths and areas that needed support. Children and young people's developing skills, confidence and attitudes to F, N and PA were captured in learning stories and assessment. This helped teachers to know each child's current level of ability.

They responded to this in their planning and provision. They made sure their equipment and activities were appropriate, so each child or young person could be involved. They scaffolded children's learning and skills development so they could all improve from the level they were at.

Young people saw that leaders and teachers cared

Principals said:

Prioritise things that work – then people will back it. Lead by example – Drive the bus! It's about finding the passions of the staff to drive each aspect.

I can't help what a parent puts in the lunchbox but I can educate the student about what is good to eat.

Even though students are aware, they can't change what's in the fridge.

Young people said:

We run clubs at lunchtime like the Wednesday walkers and the fun runners with teachers.

We go to the health group and take part in those meetings with teachers.

Our school wants us to be healthy so they check we have fruit and veges.

We learn about safety, risk taking and history as well.

He [the principal] lets the teachers come out and play.

Leaders and teachers made deliberate decisions about monitoring and regulating children and young people's lunches. They were aware of the balance needed between promoting healthy food environments, and maintaining relationships with children and their parents. Secondary school leaders also considered how 'policing' food impacted on students' ability to self-manage. Many teachers monitored children's food, and steered them towards healthier options. One principal was concerned that being strict with monitoring lunchboxes was not productive, as the students had limited control over what they brought and some parents resented any perceived criticism of the lunches they provided.

In services, teachers encouraged children to eat the healthiest things from their lunchbox first. This was a way for them to have conversations about what food was healthy and why, and to support children to eat more nutritious lunches. They reported that children shared these messages with their friends and families.

Participation in the Healthy Heart programme²⁸ had supported some services' provision for F, N and PA. It helped teachers and leaders to review how their service promoted positive attitudes and messages, and to be specific in their curriculum planning. It provided them with a framework and guidelines that supported them in their practice.

28 The Healthy Heart Awards are an initiative from the Ministry of Health and the Heart Foundation. They provide resources, structure, and workshops to support services to ensure their environment promotes healthy eating and physical activity. The different levels of awards help scaffold services in their journey to a health promoting environment. More information can be found at www.learnbyheart.org.nz/index.php/ece/healthy-heart-award

Health Promoting Schools (HPS)²⁹ supported some schools to take a more focused approach to the way they promoted student wellbeing. It helped them develop the vision and values to support children and young people's wellbeing, and monitor their progress towards goals. Primary schools³⁰ that were part of HPS were doing a better job than primary schools that were not part of HPS.³¹ Schools that were doing very well, and not part of HPS, were doing similar things to those that were doing very well and were part of HPS.

ERO visited seven secondary schools that were HPS. Three of these schools had a strong focus on student wellbeing, and were doing very well at promoting positive attitudes to F, N and PA. At one of these schools, students were mainly responsible for HPS activities in the school.³²

For both primary and secondary schools that were HPS but not doing so well, there had been changes in leadership and/or staff, which had led to the information about, and prioritising of, HPS being lost.

29 Health Promoting Schools is a school community-led development. HPS facilitators help schools to work with their communities to use their strengths to find solutions and so improve health, wellbeing and educational outcomes for their students and whānau. Information about HPS can be found at hps.tki.org.nz.

30 ERO visited 16 primary schools and seven secondary schools that were registered as HPS as part of this evaluation.

31 Differences in the distribution of judgements for HPS and non-HPS primary schools were compared using the Mann-Whitney U test. The level of statistical significance used for all testing in this report was $p < 0.05$.

32 HPS did not support secondary schools as well as it supported primary schools. It may be that secondary HPS were not doing as well as primary HPS because they are not the targeted group. HPS is targeted at schools with students in Years 1 to 8, in low socio-economic areas, and those with a high proportion of Māori, Pacific or vulnerable students.

Similarly, in some services, changes in staffing and leadership meant it was difficult to keep expectations clear and messages consistent. In a few services not doing well, teachers' lack of knowledge and valuing of F, N and PA limited their ability to plan and evaluate programmes for children. Schools and services with sound induction processes for staff and families used induction as an opportunity to share their policies and procedures to ensure expectations were consistent when new people joined their community.

Primary school leaders noted their main challenge was teachers' confidence and capability to deliver a curriculum that promoted healthy attitudes to F, N and PA.

Some schools had developed very clear PLD programmes, with a skilled and dedicated person in charge of F, N and PA promotion. A primary school story later in this report gives an example of how one school built teacher capability and confidence after identifying through internal evaluation this was an area they needed to improve.



Examples of practice: leaders' and teachers' actions

Early learning service

Children at this service for children up to 3 years old were involved in a programme encouraging them to eat fruit and vegetables. Teachers introduced this programme after they noticed that a girl was interested in broccoli.

The girl had seen broccoli plants growing in the garden of the early learning service next door. This sparked her interest in growing and eating vegetables. The girl and her mother stopped and checked on the broccoli every morning when she arrived at the service.

Teachers followed up the girl's interest by having conversations with children about eating five or more servings of fruit and vegetables each day.

Parents got on board with this, and brought in fruit and vegetables they had grown at home. Children had a chance to try fruits and vegetables they had never tried before.

The teachers were knowledgeable about good nutrition, and were also enthusiastic about making healthy food choices.

They captured the children's thinking and discussions around the fruits and vegetables, and growing food. Teachers used this to make a wall display about fruit and vegetables and healthy food choices.

The wall display helped reinforce children's learning, as well as inform parents about healthy food choices.

Primary school (HPS)

Children and teachers at this school are encouraged to *do a little bit more each time*, as a way of enacting the school motto *The best we can be*.

Teachers and leaders model healthy behaviours, showing enjoyment of physical activity and nutritious foods. For example, the principal leads Zumba sessions. Students appreciated this, and told ERO *He's a real good dancer!* and *He never sweats in his suit!* Other teachers participate in games with and against the students.

The school's PE programme is modelled on the structure of the Numeracy Programme. Students learn a skill, practise it, learn strategies and then implement them in games.

Food and nutrition in the school programme includes opportunities to grow food, prepare and eat it. Children use their produce to make things like feijoa chutney and zucchini cakes.

Leaders support staff to develop their skills. Class teachers are released to attend off site training programmes, and also receive coaching from other teachers.

They have deliberately created a culture of acceptance and inclusion. The Friendship Squad started with a group of senior students who were responsible for looking out for students who needed support. Students now naturally step up to support their peers, encouraging them to participate. *Everything is as a team*.

Secondary school

Teachers at this school were committed to providing safe opportunities for all students to be physically active. Teachers worked with parents to support students to meet their goals.

One girl had spent time in hospital, and was not able to walk even short distances comfortably. In spite of this, she wanted to take PE as a subject in Year 12.

Her parents were concerned about this, but along with her teachers, they supported the girl's choice. Teachers made sure that PE was skills focused, rather than sports focused. They worked to make the units relevant to students' lives. They motivated and encouraged the girl to succeed, providing realistic but challenging opportunities for her.

The highlight for this girl was achieving her goal to complete a biathlon. This was carefully planned and used as an assessment opportunity. She had trained hard and been prepared well by her teachers. Her parents were delighted.

Environment

ERO's effective practice statements for the environment:

Indoor and outdoor environments allow and motivate children to explore and be physically active.

Play and sports equipment is safe, appropriate and readily accessible.

Leaders and teachers provide play environments that stimulate creativity, imagination, decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Leaders and teachers promote a healthy food and nutrition environment consistent with what children learn in the curriculum. For example, food provision, fundraising, etc.

Schools and services that were doing very well used the environment to motivate young people to be active, and provided them with opportunities to learn about food and nutrition in a variety of ways. Posters and displays brought ideas and examples of healthy foods and recipes to the fore. Fruit and vegetable gardens onsite gave children and young people ready access to fresh food for snacks, lunches and food technology programmes. At one service, cards around the garden prompted questions about what was growing.

Services were well resourced for children to be physically active. They had a variety of spaces and equipment to suit different ages, abilities and interests. There were safe spaces for infants to lie, roll and explore independently. Other spaces promoted responsible risk taking and challenges for older children.

Services had a variety of static and moveable equipment that provided children with the opportunity to explore and adapt their environment in ways that were interesting and challenging to them. Leaders and teachers ensured the equipment they provided promoted a variety of skills, such as fine and gross motor skills, balance, climbing, co-ordination and upper body strength.

Like many services, primary school children had spaces to ride their bikes, scooters or skateboards. They too had a variety of spaces for different activities, such as courts, fields, adventure playgrounds and trees they were allowed to climb. Secondary schools provided students with various courts, gym spaces and fields to be active.

Schools were well resourced with equipment that was readily available to students. They were able to use the equipment for both directed and free-play activities.

The physical environment was reported as a challenge for just under 10 percent of services for their provision of physical activity opportunities for children.

The most common challenge was that the space available, even though it met licensing requirements, limited children's opportunities for running and other gross motor activities. Staff in services with this challenge but still doing very well were conscious of this and found alternative spaces, sometimes offsite, for children to be active. They made sure the equipment set out was changed regularly, so the environment continued to be interesting and challenging for children.

Leaders at nearly one in six primary schools, and just over one-quarter of secondary schools found the size or nature of their grounds limited young people's ability to be active. They did not have all-weather facilities, or enough space for all young people to be active. Time on fields and playgrounds had to be scheduled.

Several schools had built partnerships with community sports associations as a way to access better facilities for their students. These associations supported the school by installing all-weather surfaces or facilities, in return for being able to use these facilities outside school hours. One primary school had an assortment of rain jackets and gumboots, so that children could still go outside to be active in wet weather.

The impact of the environment was recognised

A principal said:

If kids are involved in daily physical activity and the environment around them encourages healthy food options, they will value physical activity, food and nutrition.

Young people said:

We have nude food – you can't have wrappers.

Lots of people bring footballs and bouncy balls to school.

We love games at playtime, there is lots to do.

Leaders reported the cost of healthy food and regular access to sporting opportunities was a challenge for secondary schools and their students. Costs included renting off-site facilities to train and play, team fees, team uniforms, sports equipment, travel to games and training camps, and the cost of healthy foods.

The food environment

Where schools and services provided food to children and young people, they worked to make sure this was healthy. Some consulted with experts in the community, or community health groups to design the menus. They promoted healthy alternatives for celebrations, such as fruit kebabs for birthday celebrations, instead of cake.

Many primary schools had opportunities for students to purchase or be provided with food while at school. In many primary schools, students were able to order lunches from outside providers. Some had canteens or tuck shops, although fewer than in secondary schools. All but one of the secondary schools in this evaluation had a canteen or tuck shop. This school had vending machines accessible to students.

Fruit, milk, sandwiches and Weet-Bix were the main foods provided for primary school students. Breakfasts and lunches were usually made available to students who needed them. Some schools had taken steps to reduce the perceived stigma of receiving food from the school. This included having breakfast available to all students, or buying lunches for students in need alongside regular lunch orders. Some secondary schools also had breakfast clubs, although this was less common.

In both primary and secondary schools that were doing very well, schools reviewed the food sold for lunches. They used expert advice and nutritional guidelines to support decision making around what food was available. In secondary schools, students also had a say in what was offered.

Most schools had healthy options available for students to purchase, and many had looked to improve their menus. Secondary schools were limited by their concerns that if students could not get what they wanted, at a price they were willing to pay, they would go offsite to local dairies and fast-food outlets. Healthy options tended to be more expensive, and students were very price sensitive. One secondary student told ERO that if their school canteen changed the menu to no longer include the cheap, unhealthy options, there would be a lot of *hungry and angry boys*.

Some schools ran their own canteens, or had canteens run by volunteers. Unfortunately, many self-run canteens lost money, so schools contracted out the canteen to external providers. These providers were profit driven, and tended to be most interested in stocking what would sell well; not usually the healthy options.

Boards of trustees in some schools recognised the effect of price on students' purchasing decisions, and subsidised healthier options in order to make them more attractive to students. Another school renegotiated the terms of the contract with the provider, in return for the provider no longer selling soft drinks.

In spite of it being a successful fundraiser, most schools (both primary and secondary) did not sell chocolate as a way to raise money. They were aware of the messages they were sending, and so considered alternative ways to raise money, such as fun runs, activity days and quiz nights. Some still used sausage sizzles to fundraise. A few schools that were doing somewhat well overall still used chocolate or cake stalls for fundraising.

The environment around the school was a concern for many school leaders. Ready access to fast food and other unhealthy options was a challenge. Some parents provided unhealthy food for their children to eat at school. Students regularly bought unhealthy foods from local dairies, fast food outlets and petrol stations on their way to and from school, or, for some, they could visit these outlets at lunchtimes. Schools on busy roads found that students were not able to safely use active forms of transport to and from school, so would be dropped off by car or bus. While reducing students' access to unhealthy foods, it also reduced their opportunities for incidental activity.



Examples of practice: environmental support

Early learning service

This service aims to promote a simple, natural and sustainable environment that creates complexity in children's learning. Their environment, along with the nature based programme, promotes thinking, risk taking, problem solving and resilience. Teachers talk of the environment as the third teacher.

The variety of spaces and equipment prompts and encourages children to be creative, work together and challenge themselves physically.

The playground now has a river running through it, designed and constructed by the children. Adults supported the children and made sure they had high quality, fit for purpose equipment to do this.

The children created a river bed from large boulders and river stones. Water is pumped over the river bed from an underground storage tank.

Children climb on the stones and boulders, developing their balance and confidence.

ERO saw children working in a sandpit construction site. They needed some water for their construction.

The children worked in different ways to use the river to get water. Some worked together to fill buckets and carry the water to the sand. Other children found some spouting and used this to divert water from the river to where it was needed.

The environment invited the children to be physically active in ways that were meaningful to them.

Primary school (HPS)

Growing great learners is the school's vision, and is enacted through the school's resourcing, staffing, decision making and enviro curriculum. The aim is to build school wide understanding and responsibility for wellness as the key to being an effective learner.

The school's garden and orchard are at the heart of their integrated science, health and technology curriculum. The board of trustees funds extra staff to help care for the garden and orchard, as part of their commitment to *Growing great learners*.

There are vegetable gardens and orchards. Indian and Pacific themed gardens are planted with flowers to attract butterflies and bees. These gardens reflect cultures in the school community, so are engaging for all children.

Students learn to plant, nurture and harvest food, as well as make compost, care for worm farms and look after chickens. They learn about healthy eating as they prepare their garden produce, cook and serve it. They make foods from the different cultures in their school community – sushi, spring rolls, curries, fritters, salads and soups.

Sandwich making days are an opportunity for students to make their own sandwiches, try new fillings and enjoy sharing a meal together.

Parents support the programme by helping in the gardens, with bee keeping and preparing food from the garden produce.

Secondary school

Teachers at this girls' school have a shared philosophy for student health and wellbeing and work closely as a team.

They are active themselves, and support school teams during the week and on the weekends. The school has a policy that all teams will have someone from the staff to support them. They see that sport and physical activity is a way to engage students in learning, and keep potentially disengaged students at school.

All teachers are encouraged to bring physical activity into their classes and provided with professional development to help them consider ways to do this. For example, language teachers take students outside to count objects.

The sports coordinator and staff monitor who is involved in sports, and encourage those not participating to join in other activities. Staff were aware that many students spent their lunchtimes inside and inactive. They made changes to encourage students to spend their lunch times outside when the weather permitted, and in more active ways.

The sports coordinator worked with the student sports council to get ideas for ways to encourage lunchtime activity. They decided to try moving picnic tables to sunny areas and set up activity opportunities like volleyball nets nearby. They organised regular lunchtime games for fun, such as dodgeball and tug of war. They connected this to house points to encourage participation.

The principal has noticed students are now much more active at break times, and students commented they talk to each other more as a result of these initiatives.

Internal evaluation for improvement

ERO's effective practice statements for internal evaluation:

The school/service gathers, analyses and evaluates data to determine the impact of the curriculum and environment on equitable student outcomes.

Leaders monitor and evaluate physical activity, food and nutrition as part of the curriculum.

Schools and services that were doing very well were improvement focused. They wanted to know how they were doing, and how they could be better. They collected data from a variety of sources, analysed it and used the information to make changes. Leaders were honest about what was working, and what needed to change. They wanted to be effective.

Young people, their parents and teachers were all involved in providing feedback. Surveys, committees and informal feedback were all used to gather information on how the curriculum and environment was supporting children's needs. One primary school arranged for an audit of the playground, including what parts of the playground children preferred, and how the children were using the spaces within it. This information supported them to make decisions around how to best design and use their environment.

Secondary schools collected information on students' participation in physical activity, both in school and out. They wanted to know students were being active in some way. They used this information to identify students who were not participating. They then worked with the students and their family to find a way for them to be active that they enjoyed. Leaders also analysed and reported on trends in the data to their board, using the information to evaluate the impact of their initiatives to increase participation.

Students also noticed things they felt could be improved. They conducted inquiries into the issues and made recommendations to their school leaders. Leaders respected the students' input, and acted on it. For example, a student at a secondary school noticed that there was a low rate of participation in school sports. After investigating, she came up with a solution, which teachers supported. Rather than trying to influence all students, she targeted the students seen as leaders by their peers. By encouraging them to participate, others followed and the overall number of students participating increased.

Leaders and teachers were focused on improvement

Leaders and teachers asked:

Does our planning and practice support our philosophical statement?

How well do children, families and whānau understand the links between food, sustainability and lifestyle?

What can we do to make the kindergarten better?

Young people said:

The teacher asks if it was fun and if we'd like to do it again.

Examples of practice: internal evaluation for improvement

Early learning service

A new centre manager at this service promoted a reflective, professional environment, where teachers were encouraged to critically examine their practices.

They noticed that meal times were not enjoyable, and did not respond to children's wants and needs. They asked themselves, *how can we improve children's mealtime routine so it is empowering, respectful and authentic towards their own wants, needs and routines?*

Teachers decided having group meal times did not support children to manage their own hunger and appetite. They knew the children were eating a well balanced diet, but the routines around food could be improved.

After a detailed evaluation of the situation, teachers decided to allow children to choose what they ate and when. Small groups of children ate together when they were hungry, with a teacher alongside.

Teachers set up a chart system so they could record when and what children had eaten, and to keep track of children with food allergies.

The outcomes from this change included meal times being less hurried, children having more opportunities for conversation and taking more responsibility for decisions affecting their nutritional wellbeing.

Teachers continue to monitor the impact of their changes, to make sure they are supporting children to make responsible decisions for their wellbeing.

Primary school (HPS)

This school delivers learning programmes in 'learning centres' that present the curriculum through students' areas of interest. The principal regularly surveys the students and community about how well the school is serving their needs.

They identified the learning centre that delivered the curriculum through a physical activity lens was not as effective as they wanted. Teachers did not feel capable nor confident to deliver quality programmes. In response, they employed a specialist PE/health teacher. He modelled lessons for teachers, and provided them with resources and guidance. They then had to teach, and he observed and gave feedback.

The lessons were skills based and had very clear objectives and progressions. They were designed for the different needs of the students. The programmes were well planned and thought out, with many layers to support teaching and learning. The focus was on doing it right, not doing it in a hurry. The clear structure and support, with comprehensive PLD gradually built teacher confidence and capability.

As teachers become more confident, they were also more involved and became role models. They set up a staff shared weight-loss commitment. They supported each other in their journey towards improved health – healthy eating, exercising together, walking and having swimming races. Students saw their teachers improving their health and having fun.

The culture of school became strong around physical activity and health and nutrition. All agreed (including students) that staff buy-in made a big difference. Students talked about their increased confidence and willingness to participate.

School leaders developed a plan to phase out the specialist teacher's input over three years as teachers become more capable.

Secondary school

Student wellbeing is identified in this school's goals, alongside academic success. In order to progress towards its goals, the school starts with gathering a variety of baseline data. This includes surveys of students, teachers and the school community.

This information helps them evaluate their current practice, and forms the starting point for them to plan for *where do we want to be?*

Senior leaders were concerned students may have been buying unhealthy food before and after school from the large shopping mall across the road. They decided to review and assess this.

They started with gathering data. They surveyed students on their use of the shopping mall, monitored what food and drinks students were bringing in to the school, and watched at the checkouts for what students were buying.

After confirming that students were regularly buying things such as large bottles of soft drink, they took action. Leaders and teachers spoke to students about their choices, and suggested alternatives to the unhealthy choices. They used school assemblies and newsletters to promote healthy food messages. Prefects support junior students to make good choices about food and health.

Leaders and teachers will continue to evaluate their school practices and environment to support and improve the wellbeing of their students.

Young people's learning and participation

ERO asked 'How well are children learning about and participating in programmes and activities relating to food, nutrition and physical activity?'

- > What do children know and value about food, nutrition and physical activity that will help them to make healthy choices in the future?
- > How do children have opportunities to participate in and learn about food, nutrition and physical activity?
- > How do children actively contribute to decisions about food, nutrition and physical activity in their service/school?

Young people knowing and valuing

ERO's effective practice statements for knowing and valuing:

Children develop positive, responsible attitudes to their own wellbeing; respect, care and concern for other people and the environment; and a sense of social justice.

Children develop resilience and a sense of personal and social responsibility. They are increasingly able to take responsibility for themselves and contribute to the wellbeing of those around them.

Children can explain why physical activity, food and nutrition choices are important for their health and wellbeing.

Children develop skills and gain enjoyment from physical activity (team/individual), food and nutrition.

Children value fair play, sportsmanship and other children's contributions.

Children have high expectations of themselves in physical activity, food and nutrition, and model good behaviours.

Young people developed good knowledge around how to be physically healthy and why this was important. They learnt to manage themselves, and to support others to make good choices and experience physical wellbeing.

Children in services worked together to design challenges, problem solve and take risks. They shared their own and their whānau expertise and valued each other's contributions and attempts. They learnt about their own body's abilities, and the food they needed to grow. Children knew the link between food and energy, and to prioritise healthy options from their lunchboxes.

Children were able to monitor their own food, and would tell their parents if their lunch was not healthy. They influenced younger children or children new to the service, to encourage them to eat healthier options.

All children were included and challenged. They reflected on what they were able to do, and the range of techniques they used to perform physical tasks. They compared their techniques to other children's, and discussed differences in a way that encouraged each other.

In services and primary schools, children learnt about nutrition in an integrated curriculum, often in the context of growing their own food.

Primary school children knew about the food pyramid, how to read nutrition panels, and talked about foods as 'often' and 'sometimes' foods. They knew about the importance of nutrition for oral health, obesity and diabetes prevention.

An inquiry project at one primary school was an opportunity for students to assess their own eating and activity habits. This also provided their teachers with useful information to plan lessons. Students collected information on what they ate, drank, how much they slept and what sorts of activities they did for two weeks. They then analysed their findings and made an assessment of how healthy their habits were.



Knowing the importance

Young people said:

We know it's important to keep healthy, so our teeth are strong, and we don't get fat or get diabetes.

It's about balance. You don't have to have no sugar – just eat healthy.

Takeaways and junk food have artificial chemicals and heaps of sugar and preservatives.

You need slow [release] energy so that you feel good for a longer time.

It's a problem because [fast food] is so much cheaper than a bag of apples.

Food gives you energy. Healthiness helps with work and learning in class.

Eat healthy when you are younger because it helps you get better when you are older – eating the right foods cleanses your body.

From my health lesson I learned that it is not normal to have a glass of [soft drink] every 2 days. I was drinking too much fizz and I haven't drunk any since then.

Knowing the importance

Young people said:

It's better to eat food that has a natural wrapper, like an apple with its peel on.

It [exercise] helps you get into the learning stage a little bit. It helps you relax.

If you are not fit you let your team down.

I'm really fit and healthy and active. I've worked really hard. I don't see it as a chore.

If you go for a run it makes you feel nice. It frees my head.

Playing sport and eating healthy makes your brain work better.

Other lessons for primary school students looked at factors that influenced decision making and how to make good choices. For example, one school used persuasive writing as an opportunity for children to explore decision making around food. Another school looked at how price affected people's decisions when choosing what to buy.

Primary school children were knowledgeable about their physical abilities. They learnt proper technique and skills for a variety of activities, and had the opportunity to practise these in fun games. Children chose the level at which they participated, so they experienced some challenge. They knew that participating, trying and succeeding lifted their confidence and self-esteem.

Secondary school students explored the wider issues relating to F, N and PA, including economic, social and ethical influences on decision making, and the impact of advertising and addiction on people's choices. They knew the link between nutrition and physical performance, and valued being fit and healthy for their team.

Like primary school students, secondary students saw that participation, fair play and 'having a go' were ways to support their own and others' wellbeing, improve their self-esteem and build a sense of community. Participating was seen as 'cool', and part of the culture of their school.

Students identified that specific teaching influenced their decision making around F, N and PA. However, they also identified the impact of social media, family, friends, coaches and other information sources on their knowledge and choices. For example, some students enjoyed sharing pictures of healthy meals on social media. This was one way they informed themselves of good nutrition, along with video clips and discussions with coaches, friends and family.

Secondary school leaders did not generally impose total bans on unhealthy foods. They did not think this supported students to self-manage. Instead, they guided students towards healthier options. Senior students were allowed offsite at lunchtimes. They knew this was a responsibility and a privilege, and they needed to make good choices.



Examples of practice: demonstrating their knowledge and attitudes

Early learning services

Children at this service are supported to actively explore their environment as well as what their bodies are capable of. They are encouraged to persist and challenge themselves.

Teachers record children's progress, both in what they are able to do physically and their attitudes to challenge.

One child was very persistent at developing their physical abilities, and had strategies to reach their goals. The child explained:

For my first challenge I want to learn how to get across monkey bars...I can only do two but sometimes I can do one. I need to practise and practise and practise.

This child also enjoyed jumping, and had learnt to land on both feet with bent knees. The teacher encouraged the child to extend the activity – using a ladder as a launch pad to jump into the sandpit.

The child started trying to jump, and landed just off the edge of the ladder. With encouragement, the child tried over and over again, experimenting with different ways of jumping.

Eventually, the child found a strategy for jumping far away from the launch pad. The teacher celebrated the child's risk taking, persistence and increasing physical ability in a learning story. The child understood what persistence meant.

Primary schools

Students at this school are formally taught the school values of Aroha, Respect, Honesty, Perseverance and Initiative through a weekly 'focus value'. Staff, students and parents understand and enact these values.

Teachers recognise and celebrate students displaying the values in their work and relationships.

One student had recently been rewarded for displaying a range of these values, while showing great sportsmanship in supporting another child during a duathlon.

The Year 3 girl was participating in an inter school duathlon, when she found a child from another school had fallen from his bike into a bush.

She immediately stopped and asked if he needed help. He was injured, so she flagged down a passing child to find an adult to help. She stayed with the boy until help arrived, before rejoining the race and continuing to the end.

This girl had learnt that supporting others' contributions and showing good sportsmanship was more important than winning the race. By going on to complete the race, she showed that it was still important for her to do her best.

Secondary schools

A girl in Year 12 told ERO:

I was really big in primary school, my mum has a sweet tooth and I was happy to have anything she had. When I got to about 13 or when I came to high school I wanted to be different. I rebelled.

Mum wanted me to eat what I was having before but I wanted to be really fit for the horse riding and other sports I do. I changed to vegetarian because of the influence of one of my friends but that doesn't mean you will not be fat, as you can still have lots of sugar. Now even Mum is on the band wagon and we all eat healthy.

A Year 12 boy at the same school shared his thoughts:

I have changed because one of my future goals is to be an umpire and I have done courses already. I realised that you can't be an umpire and be [unhealthy].

When I first started I would sometimes umpire, say, three games in a row and then I would go and buy a big sweet bar and say I deserve that. I stopped doing that later. I think the idea of having a label saying how much you would have to run to burn off the bar would be good as we way underestimate what we need to burn off what we put in.

Some kids don't understand the labels well as they have different ways of describing sugar and fats. I reckon that in PE we should be asked to choose something to eat and then made to run the required time to burn it off. That would be a lesson that we'd never forget.

Children and young people participating

ERO's effective practice statements for participating:

Children are involved in personal and collective action that helps to develop and maintain supportive physical and emotional environments.

Children regularly participate in a range of physical activity that is based on fun and general skill development.

Children and young people had a wide variety of both structured and informal ways to participate. Their teachers were knowledgeable about physical skills development, and designed activities and lessons to support this. Teachers looked for opportunities for young people to learn through being active. They recognised the difference between physical activity and physical education, and made sure they taught skills as well as providing opportunities for young people to improve their fitness and have fun.

In services, teachers provided equipment that promoted the skills children were developing. Teachers knew what children were capable of, and encouraged them to challenge themselves and take sensible risks. Children were developing skills such as catching and throwing, balancing and climbing. Some services taught these skills through specific sports focuses, such as football. Movement to music was common in many services, and another opportunity for children to learn about what their bodies were capable of, in a fun way.

Children used flexible, moveable equipment to design their own challenges and obstacle courses. This meant the activities were meaningful to the children. They encouraged and supported other children to try and complete their challenges and to be involved in their play. Children were also supporting others to make healthy food choices at meal times. Some children were taking this learning home, and informing their families. A parent told ERO that their child had commented on their choice of food, saying *that's not a healthy choice*.

Students from both primary and secondary schools were also taking their learning home and influencing their families' behaviour. Secondary school students shared their knowledge with local primary school students too, helping run games and skills sessions for the younger students.

Older students in both primary and secondary schools took responsibility for supporting younger students and students with additional learning or physical needs to safely enjoy physical activity. They organised lunch-time games and clubs, managed the distribution of sports equipment and worked to find ways to make sure everyone could be involved. They helped design rules for using the equipment and environment in ways that kept everyone safe. The primary school story following shows how student leaders supported others to be active and participate in games.

Students enjoyed a wide variety of individual and team sports, with a mix of social and competitive opportunities. The opportunities provided followed students' interests and skill level. Teachers found ways to support students to participate at a level that was appropriate for them.

Students valued each other's attempts over winning. In secondary schools, students were encouraged to train as coaches or umpires. This helped schools to encourage involvement and support all the teams that wished to play.

School leaders recognised there were many ways for students to be physically active, and sport was not for everyone. They collected data on who was participating, and in what ways. If students were not involved in a sport, they worked with the students to find something that they would enjoy participating in. This included things such as cultural dance, hiking and dog walking. Schools wanted to make sure that all students were being active in some way.



Reflecting on participation

Young people said:

We help the younger children as well, show them how to do the gardening and tell them about the butterfly gardens.

This year there are different levels for different stages of fitness – we can participate at our own level.

We all have to give it a go – it's more skill based, not just games and running around the field.

I am 10 years old and a Year 6 this year. We are having a school cultural festival on the 3rd of April. Each class is doing a dance and Room [x] is doing a Scottish dance, African dance and a Māori dance. I think that the dance is going to work out well.

We are more active now than we were at primary school.

There are competitive and non-competitive events – you don't have to be competitive to be healthy.

You need to have other things to do besides school work.

You learn time management skills by learning to balance learning, work and physical activity.

Some primary school children's opportunities to participate in education outside the classroom, sports teams and co-curricular activities were limited by parents' finances. Some schools were able to pay so all students could be involved. In a few schools, staff, including teacher aides, paid for children's sports uniforms and team fees, so they could participate as their families could not afford it.

Senior secondary students recognised a lack of time often limited their own and other students' ability to participate in physical activity. They were trying to balance the time needed for their academic needs, with physical activity, social and work commitments. This was a challenge identified in many of the secondary schools. Some schools had responded to this by making sure there was a variety of options for students, from purely social to highly competitive sports teams, and a mix of individual and team activities were supported. This meant students were able to choose types of activities and teams that matched the time they were able to commit to.

Examples of practice: young people participating in a variety of ways

Early learning services

ERO saw three girls in a grassed area doing hand stands. The girls were 2-3 years old, and cousins. They talked about hand stands, how they each did them and how good they were.

The two older girls reflected on how they used to do hand stands like the younger girl and demonstrated their advanced skills in an encouraging way to their younger cousin.

They then went on to demonstrate cart wheels. They noticed each of them did cartwheels using a different technique. One put both hands on the ground to begin the manoeuvre, the second had one hand follow the other. They practised alternating between their own and the other child's technique.

Seeing the girls' activity prompted several boys to come over to see what was going on. They were not interested in doing cart wheels or hand stands. One of the boys started doing press ups, counting out loud as he went. He then turned his body to the side and demonstrated one-handed press ups. He was very skilled and physically strong.

Another of the boys (who said he wants to play rugby for the All Blacks or league for the Sharks) demonstrated diving on a ball, running and scoring tries. He knew how important fitness and these skills were for achieving his goal.

Primary schools

Learning happens through play at this school, which gives students opportunities to be active throughout the day. The principal said:

Doing things actively – making learning fun – enhances behaviour and social emotional wellbeing.

Older students learn to support other students in games, learning how to behave as part of their developing leadership skills, and supporting their own and others' wellbeing.

The Physical Activity Leaders (PALs) are a group of older students that *go to a course... to learn to help others*. They are trained to organise and supervise activities and make sure everyone plays safely and responsibly.

Each PAL has a class to play with. They set up activities and support children to participate and have fun.

The school rewards children's positive behaviour. Each week, one class is awarded a special box of additional sports equipment to recognise their good behaviour.

The principal noticed that using play as a way to learn, teaching children to be leaders, to support each other's wellbeing and rewarding positive behaviour in this way led to students *playing better in their own time now – inventing games in their free time*.

Secondary schools

A student was very self-conscious about his weight. He kept bringing notes to be excused from PE class, because he was embarrassed. His teacher talked to the school nurse about the problem.

The nurse worked with the boy. She gave him a pedometer, and set up an exercise programme he could commit to. Instead of skipping PE, he did his own exercise by walking around the school during PE time.

The school had found a way for the boy to participate in a way that was comfortable for him. He learnt to take responsibility for his own activity. By seeing his own improvement, he developed a more positive attitude to exercise, as well as healthy eating.

Children and young peoples' decision making

ERO's effective practice statements for decision making:

Children are actively involved in contributing ideas, especially about decisions that affect them.

Children contribute to the development of a curriculum that is responsive to their culture, languages and identities and deep interests.

Children know how to access and evaluate information to make informed choices.

Inquiry-based learning models support children to learn how to make choices about their physical activity, food and nutrition.

Children and young people had input into the curriculum and environment. They had both formal and informal opportunities to contribute their ideas and interests, and these were included in the curriculum. Children and young people requested activities and resources they wanted.

In services, children were supported and encouraged to use moveable, flexible equipment to design their own play areas, obstacle courses and challenges. Children chose what to plant in the gardens at the service, and contributed their ideas for what to make with garden produce. They were supported to decide what to eat and when. Teachers guided children to make good choices, until they were able to do this independently.

In schools, young people were able to express preferences through different leadership roles, and were expected and supported to make good choices. Surveys, student councils and committees were used as a more formal way for young people to make decisions and have input about things that affected them. Secondary students were also involved in deciding the food on offer in their school canteens.

Older students acted as role models and mentors for younger students. They provided the younger students with information and encouragement to make good decisions. They took their learning home, and shared their ideas with their families. Students had access to good information, and were reflective and honest about how they made decisions.

Leaders and teachers valued young people's input. They respected and acted on children and young people's concerns, ideas and solutions. This increased young people's confidence to make good choices about F, N and PA.

Young people applied their knowledge

Young people said:

It's new this year, but the students get to run fitness in the mornings.

I sometimes annoy my family by pointing out health qualities of foods.

However, knowledge did not always translate to action

[Advertising] might convince me that it's good for me, but [knowing it is not healthy is] not enough for me not to eat it.

Examples of practice: children and young people applied their knowledge to make changes

Early learning services

Children in this service make decisions about their environment and their learning programme.

The children identified there was a problem with the bike track. Stones from the garden kept falling onto the track, which was causing children to have accidents and fall off their bikes.

They went to the teachers with the problem. The teachers thought they should raise the edge of the garden so the stones could not fall out anymore, but instead of just making that decision, they helped the children to brainstorm other solutions.

The children ended up deciding the best solution was to move the stones away from the bike track. Teachers agreed this solution was a good one, and the children made a plan to get the job done.

They decided where to move the stones to, and worked together to change their environment so they could all participate safely and enjoy riding their bikes.

By empowering the children, teachers helped encourage them to take responsibility for problem solving.

Primary schools (HPS)

The school placed a high value on children's health. The principal said:

PE and health is really important. Through being healthy and fit they learn about thinking and developing strategies for problem solving. Looking after a child's physical and mental health will lead them to be more connected to learning and achievement. The whole school now focuses on a balanced curriculum. Before they worked in isolated silos.

This message was understood by students, and they were able to make decisions around their own health and wellbeing. For example, one student noticed their after school care programme was giving out lollies. He asked *Isn't this wrong? Don't they have to have the same rules as us? They are on our school site.*

He went to the principal with his concern. The principal agreed this was an inconsistency in the message being sent to students. The practice was stopped.

A student health team was set up in the school. Representatives from each area in the school volunteer to be on the team. They devise and lead activities and organise sports at play and lunch time.

The health team promotes positive messages across the school. For example, they held a T shirt competition where students had to design a T shirt with a healthy message on it. They also produced a video that was shown at assembly. It was very funny and had healthy eating messages. These activities engaged the children, who then talked about these messages at home.

Secondary schools

Students have an opportunity to make decisions and influence change through this school's Student Council and Student Forum. Leaders and teachers respect and act on suggestions from these groups.

They have developed a process to make sure students receive feedback on their suggestions, and know what the outcome will be and why.

Students, through the Student Council, expressed concerns about the number of vending machines on the school site, and the kinds of drinks these sold. The school had seven vending machines, and were receiving a payment from the supplier in return for allowing them onsite.

Students were not happy about how easy it was for students to access soft drink at school. The Student Council gained support from health and physical education teachers, before speaking with the principal.

The principal acknowledged the students' concerns, and agreed to arrange for the removal of most of the vending machines. The principal also agreed that the remaining vending machines should have healthier options, and negotiated with the supplier to make sure this happened.

The principal was committed to acting on students' ideas and concerns, even though this meant the loss of revenue from the supplier.

Whānau and community involvement

ERO's effective practice statements for whānau and community involvement:

Whānau aspirations for their children influence the philosophy, vision, goals and plans for food, nutrition and physical activity.

Leaders and teachers encourage whānau to participate in, and contribute to activities about food, nutrition and physical activity.

Leaders and teachers work in partnership with whānau of children with diverse physical and nutritional needs and abilities to improve and enhance their learning.

Leaders and teachers consult with whānau and provide them with opportunities to contribute to decision making and internal evaluation.

Leaders and teachers draw on the strengths of whānau and community members to provide learning opportunities for children.

Leaders regularly communicate with, share resources and facilities, and develop policy with other services or schools and the wider community. For example, community gardens or sporting facilities.

Partnerships across health, education and social services are developed and sustained.

Health/education interventions are relevant and appropriate to the priorities identified by the school community and are evaluated, reviewed and celebrated.

Parents and whānau

Schools and services viewed parents, whānau and the community as important partners for promoting health messages to young people. Leaders and teachers were deliberate and strategic about engaging with parents and whānau, and were persistent in finding ways to get them involved.

Service leaders included parents when they reviewed the programme and policies. This helped parents to know and understand services' values and practices.

Parents added to services' programmes by sharing their interest, skills and culture. They did things like prepare a cultural meal with the children, and share their culture while they were eating. Parents helped maintain gardens at the service, and both used the produce and shared produce from their own gardens. Some parents set up fruit and vegetable co-operatives with others in the service, to enable easier and cheaper access to fruit and vegetables for their families.

Service teachers and leaders found many ways to support parents' learning about F, N and PA. They held parent evenings where experts from the community shared their knowledge, shared recipes and ideas for activities and provided new mothers with information and support to breastfeed. They shared information about the resources available in the community, so parents were able to continue their activity and learning outside the service.

One service worked to increase parents' knowledge of the importance and effect of healthy eating. They asked parents to send a piece of fruit or vegetable for the children to share at snack time. They thanked the parents, and reinforced the message that good nutrition supports learning and wellbeing. Their message is shared in the box to the right.

Schools used a variety of formal and informal ways to find out about parents' and children's interests and aspirations for their child. They used this information to plan and implement programmes. School leaders built relationships with parents, so they were able to work together if they had a concern about their child. They knew working together would achieve a more successful outcome for the child. The secondary school story following shows a variety of ways one school used to engage parents.

Schools that were doing very well educated parents about F, N and PA, as well as their children, using a variety of ways such as posters, newsletters and school Facebook pages to encourage and inform parents. This was important, as young people told us that their parents and whānau had a big influence on their eating and activity habits.

Whānau and the community were valued partners

Leaders and teachers said:

When we enrol a child, we enrol a whole family.

Your donation was gifted to the tamariki today, and helped fill their puku, minds and spirits to continue to learn to the best of their capability.

This is exactly what we were hoping to achieve with this new initiative. On behalf of the whānau... and most importantly the tamariki, we thank you.

One school wanted to help parents with ideas and information about healthy lunches. They invited the parents to come to school and have lunch with the students. The school provided healthy sandwich ingredients, and the students made lunch for themselves and their parents. This helped the parents get an understanding of other types of lunches their children could have, and combinations of fillings the children enjoyed.

Parents supported school sports teams by coaching, managing and providing transport. They helped out at school camps, and fundraised to provide equipment or subsidise team or camp fees.

The most common challenge identified across services was managing the type and quantity of food parents provided to their children for when they were at the service. While some services had seen improvements in children's lunchboxes after their consistent and persistent sharing of messages, others struggled. Teachers in some services were also conscious about how they shared these messages. They did not want to be seen as the 'food police'. The early learning story following shows how one service used a variety of ways to communicate with parents around healthy eating.

Another challenge across services was financial constraints on parents. Teachers and parents felt healthy food was expensive. Some services addressed this issue by giving parents ideas for affordable and healthy lunchbox items, and established the fruit and vegetable co-operative mentioned earlier.

Primary school leaders said parent participation had declined over time. They felt parents did not have enough time to be able to properly support school activities. They commented that many families had both parents working; sometimes more than one job or shift work. This put more pressure on teachers to coach and manage sports teams, and schools had to find other ways of transporting students to off-site activities.

Many secondary schools found it difficult to find enough people to support sports teams as coaches or managers. Teachers and parents did not have the time to provide what was needed. Some addressed this by successfully encouraging senior students to train as coaches or umpires. This had the additional benefit of them being seen as role models by younger students.



The wider community

Schools and services that were doing well at promoting positive attitudes towards F, N and PA had built good links with the wider community. School and service leaders consulted with community experts to develop their food policies and plans for improving the health of their students and communities. Local businesses, charities and trusts supported schools and services with sponsorship and resources for physical activity and sports. They often also supported schools and services to build and maintain their gardens.

Leaders and teachers worked with other schools and services to share resources, know what children and young people were learning at different levels, and to have fun together. Children from early learning services participated in primary schools' games and cross-country events, primary and secondary school teachers and leaders knew what children were learning before they arrived at the school, and secondary school students worked with primary school students running games, breakfast clubs and school sports teams.

Leaders and teachers made good use of experts in their communities. They knew what they were able to do, and what was best referred to someone else. In secondary schools, this often meant when they had concerns around a student's body weight or eating habits, they referred the student to a counsellor or community health nurse. Some schools hosted community health services onsite as a way of building links with these providers. Another had a school nurse who served as a liaison with community health professionals.

Both primary schools and services invited external facilitators to add to their programme. This provided children with resources and teaching their own teachers were able to build on and continue in the regular programme. They also invited past students to come back and act as role models and coaches for the current students.

Young people were supported to use community facilities and resources, and community groups were invited to use school facilities. Some schools successfully built reciprocal relationships with sports clubs, where the club provided the school with resources or upgraded the school's facilities. For example, one school was able to work with their local cricket association to install an all-weather cricket pitch. The association paid for the pitch to be installed on the school grounds, and in exchange, they were able to use the pitch after school and on weekends.

School leaders worked with their local councils and police to ensure students were able to walk or ride to school safely. School leaders asked councils to look at ways to make sure there were good footpaths around schools. Police came into schools and taught students how to keep themselves safe while walking or riding their bikes, scooters or skateboards.

Examples of practice: working with whānau and the community

Early learning services

At this service, there are families from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Teachers found language was sometimes a barrier to making sure all the parents understood the service's expectations for the type and amount of food children should bring.

They also found sometimes different cultural values around food and celebrations could be a challenge.

The teachers wanted the parents to be interested and involved in the programme, especially around food and nutrition, as a way to help them understand each other's cultures and expectations.

They invited the parents to come in and cook with the children. This let parents share their cultural foods and talk about their culture with the children and teachers.

Teachers started sharing healthy recipes with the parents, and talking about environmental sustainability practices. They held a workshop for parents about the impact of food packaging, and packaged food.

The teachers have noticed that since doing these things, children's lunchboxes are looking much healthier. There has been a decrease in the amount of pre packaged, processed food, and children are being given healthier options instead.

Primary schools

Parents are actively included in this school. The principal surveys parents about what physical activity opportunities they want for their child, and how important they think these are. This also gives parents an opportunity to feedback on what they like about the programme or what changes they hope to see. This information helps leaders make decisions about the programme.

Parents who show an interest are encouraged and supported to be involved as coaches or managers of school sports teams. The school provides them with training to help them get involved.

The school finds ways to remove barriers to parents' participation. For example, two parents who spoke English as a second language showed an interest in supporting school sports after seeing an information pamphlet that had been sent home, but were concerned language differences could be a problem.

The school's ESOL teacher encouraged the parents. The sports leader asked the parents, *How can I help you to achieve this?* They came up with a plan. The parents were trained as coaches, and teachers kept in regular contact with the parents. They guided and supported the parents to be more confident.

The ESOL teacher encouraged a different parent to set up a yoga class at school for some of the other parents. This was used as an opportunity to support parents' physical wellbeing, as well as help them build a sense of community.

Secondary school (HPS)

Parents and the community are considered a very important part of this school. Parents are kept well informed through a variety of methods, such as Facebook, the school website and newsletter.

Leaders and teachers want parents and the community to be active and involved in the school. They have several different ways they encourage parents and the community to participate in the school.

Year 9 and 10 students have access to an annual expo to show prospective students and parents what sports and activity options are available at the school.

There is a parent and community sports council. This group meets to discuss the activities and support they think the students need. This information is then shared with school leaders, who use this to make changes.

School facilities are available for the community to use. The school encourages neighbouring schools and clubs to use the turf, dance room and the gymnasium.

A Sportsacular evening was a chance for students, teachers, parents and the community to come together and play games, answer quiz questions and share food. It was a fun and successful way for the school to build positive relationships with parents and the community and encourage students to try new activities, while being active together.

Many of the school's cultural and service groups use physical activity to promote or fundraise for their groups. For example, the kapa haka group raised money by being sponsored to complete a community fun run. Another group were sponsored to 'Step to Everest' on a local business' staircase to raise funds and awareness for the people of Nepal.

Conclusion

Overall, schools and services were doing a good job of promoting healthy attitudes to F, N and PA. Values, policy and practice aligned to make sure children and young people had access to good information, as well as opportunities to make choices about their own wellbeing.

This good practice was particularly evident in early learning services. Children were gaining a solid foundation in how to make positive choices for their health and wellbeing.

While schools and services were doing a good job of equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make healthy choices around F, N and PA, young people were not always able to make these healthy choices. Environmental and financial constraints limited their ability to participate in physical activity. They were restricted in their ability to make healthy nutritional choices by the food that was available to them, either as a result of what was affordable, or what their parents chose to provide.

Leaders and teachers faced a range of challenges in their provision for children and young people. Financial, environmental and resourcing constraints limited children's access to nutritious food and opportunities for physical activity. Some leaders found ways to address these constraints, and others struggled to address them.

Schools and early learning services can teach children and young people to value healthy food, nutrition and physical activity. To effectively change behaviour, parents, whānau, local government and the wider community needs to support children and young people with opportunities to enact these values.

Schools and services know that young people have developed positive attitudes to food, nutrition and physical activity when they share messages such as:

Not too much screen time – get out and get active.

Eat healthy and stay active. If you eat [fast food] each day, you can't even get out of bed. If you are a couch potato, your skin will get stuck to the couch!

Have a good balance, be wise, and never go overboard.

Stay healthy and fit so that our bodies when older, don't get bad conditions... don't get fat.

Be physical on an everyday basis – keep your body moving

We have to be careful because we [Māori] are the ones that get fat and die young.

Encourage others to eat healthily.

Need to have physical activity consistently to benefit from it.

Be aware of how much you are eating and the amount of activity you are doing.

You need to put the effort in to get something out – keep trying to get fitter.

Appendix 1: Methodology

ERO made an overall evaluative judgement for each school and early learning service in response to the question:

How well does the service/school promote positive attitudes to physical activity and food and nutrition to benefit children?

ERO gathered information from 202 early learning services during their regular education reviews during Term 1, 2016.

A sample of 46 primary schools and 29 secondary schools were reviewed by special review teams, and F, N and PA was the sole focus of the review. Primary schools were visited during Term 1, 2016. Secondary schools were visited during Term 2, 2016.

The schools were selected from eight District Health Board (DHB) areas, including those with high, average and low rates of children aged 2-14 years who have been identified as obese or overweight.

Within each DHB area, at least one school participating in the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) scheme was identified and selected. Some of the DHBs did not have secondary schools participating in the HPS. Additional secondary schools participating in HPS were selected in other regions to make up for this. Schools were also selected to reflect the national population of schools as closely as possible (decile grouping, school type, location).

Further detail about the schools and services in this evaluation can be found in Appendix 3.

ERO asked the following key questions in each school or service to inform their overall judgement:

1. How well are physical activity, food and nutrition programmes planned and implemented?
2. How well are children learning about and participating in programmes and activities relating to physical activity, food and nutrition?
3. How well is the service/school involving whānau and the community in approaches and activities?
4. What stories of success or challenges does the service/school have to share?

The questions ERO used to guide discussion and the effective practice statements ERO used to judge how well a school or service promoted positive attitudes to F, N and PA are in the findings sections of this report.

Data collection

During each review, ERO collected information from a variety of sources including:

- > discussions with leaders and/or teachers at each school or service
- > documentation related to the operation of the service or school and children's learning
- > observation of the school or service environment
- > conversations with school students.

Appendix 2: Food, nutrition and physical activity in previous ERO reports

Early learning services

Working with Te Whāriki and Priorities for Children's Learning in Early Childhood Services (both 2013)

- > wellbeing and belonging were the strands most commonly referred to in documentation such as planning and assessment records
- > some services lacked planned or enacted curriculum relating to other strands, such as exploration
- > services that effectively used information about children's learning typically reviewed a variety of topics relating to children's learning, including developing children's learning through outdoor play.

Infants and toddlers: competent and confident communicators and explorers (2015)

- > fifty-six percent of services had a curriculum that supported infants and toddlers to become competent and confident communicators and explorers
- > highly responsive services offered infants appropriate physical challenges, such as opportunities to pull, push, touch and grasp
- > in less responsive services, children had fewer opportunities to explore and develop physical confidence. Priority was given to warm and nurturing relationships.

Primary schools

The quality of teaching in Years 4 and 8: Health and Physical Education (2007)

- > thirty-six percent of teachers were effective or highly effective in all six areas of good quality teaching (content of learning programmes, use of resources and technologies, subject and pedagogical knowledge, identifying and meeting needs of diverse groups of students, assessment, and student motivation and engagement)
- > where teachers were less effective, school-wide policies and planning did not support the teaching, assessment, and reporting of health and physical education as a cohesive learning area. This led to a narrowness of learning, where teachers taught physical activity rather than physical education, and made health part of 'topic time', instead of teaching it within the context of the health and physical education curriculum
- > learning programmes at about half of schools did not emphasise the relationship between physical activity and sport studies and other key areas of learning such as mental health, body care and personal safety, and food and nutrition.

Wellbeing for children's success at primary school (2015)

- > high quality implementation of the health and physical education curriculum was found to be linked to higher levels of student wellbeing in primary schools
- > in the schools where wellbeing was promoted through the curriculum:
 - teachers had a deep understanding of health teaching and learning
 - students explored many health topics relevant to their wellbeing, such as why some people have too much food and others not enough in the same small community
 - schools consulted with their community, and made careful use of community expertise for particular health topics.

KiwiSport in schools (2010 and 2012)

- > KiwiSport funding had a positive impact on the availability and accessibility of sports opportunities, the number of students participating in organised sport, and students' sports skills development
- > KiwiSport had an impact on schools' physical education programmes and resourcing
- > Kiwisport funding led to specialist coaches and instructors working with both teachers and students to teach fundamental skills for a range of abilities
- > forty-one percent of primary schools said the time spent on physical education had increased, while 58 percent said it had not changed
- > main challenges identified were funding available, involving parents, accessing specialists, and fitting physical education into a crowded curriculum.

Secondary schools

Wellbeing for Young People's Success at Secondary School (2015)

- > one of nine key ideas that demonstrate the desired outcomes for student wellbeing is that students are physically active and lead healthy lifestyles
- > support for wellbeing varied across schools
- > wellbeing was promoted through the school values and curriculum
- > wellbeing issues were responded to at an individual or group level and there was often specialist support for students with particular needs
- > students in schools that were well placed to ensure student wellbeing, experienced respectful relationships with their peers and with adults that were based on shared values
- > students were seen as inherently capable and expected to contribute to, and be accountable for, the experiences of others
- > in general, students would benefit from more teachers and leaders asking them about their experiences and involving them in decisions about the quality of their school life
- > students would also benefit from schools being more deliberate in promoting wellbeing in the curriculum
- > schools could be more deliberate in their use of the health and physical education learning area; learning contexts in all learning areas and out-of-class activities that complement what students are learning in school.

Appendix 3: Schools and services in this evaluation

The sample included more kindergartens and Playcentres, and fewer education and care and home-based education and care services, than is representative of New Zealand early learning services. This is likely because ERO schedules reviews of services that are part of a larger organisation together. The sample was representative of New Zealand early learning services in terms of EQI distribution and location.³³

There were fewer small and very small schools and more very large primary schools in this sample than is representative of New Zealand as a whole. The sample was representative of New Zealand primary schools for type, decile and location. The sample was representative of New Zealand secondary schools for type, decile, location and size.

Early learning services in this evaluation

Table 1: Service type

Early learning service type	Number of ELS in sample	Percentage of ELS in sample	National percentage of ELS ³⁴
Kindergarten	41	20	16
Playcentre	29	15	11
Education and Care	119	59	62
Home-based Education and Care Networks	13	6	11
Total	202	100	100

³³ The differences between observed and expected values in Tables 1-11 were tested using a Chi square test.

³⁴ The national percentage of early learning services is as at 3 March 2016.

Table 2: Equity index

EQI Value ³⁵	Number of ELS in sample	Percentage of ELS in sample	National percentage of ELS
Unknown/Not applicable	7	4	8
EQI 1	11	5	4
EQI 2	17	8	6
EQI 3	9	5	7
EQI 4	26	13	12
EQI 5+	132	65	63
Total	202	100	100

Table 3: Location

Urban/rural area ³⁶	Number of ELS in sample	Percentage of ELS in sample	National percentage of ELS
Main urban area	155	77	75
Secondary urban area	5	2	6
Minor urban area	22	11	11
Rural area	20	10	8
Total	202	100	100

³⁵ The Equity Index is a measure of the proportion of children at an early learning service that come from low socio-economic communities. Services with lower EQI values receive more funding than services with high EQI values. More information is available at www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/running-an-ece-service/funding/equity-funding/

³⁶ Main urban areas have a population greater than 30,000; secondary urban areas have a population between 10,000 and 29,999; minor urban areas have a population between 1000 and 9,999; and rural areas have a population less than 1000.

Primary schools in this evaluation

Table 4: School type

School type	Number of schools in sample	Percentage of schools in sample	National percentage of schools ³⁷
Full primary (Years 1-8)	19	41	53
Contributing (Years 1-6)	23	50	41
Intermediate (Years 7-8)	4	9	6
Total	46	100	100

Table 5: Decile

Decile group ³⁸	Number of schools in sample	Percentage of schools in sample	National percentage of schools
Low decile	15	33	29
Medium decile	18	39	39
High decile	13	28	32
Total	46	100	100

37 The national percentage of schools as at 3 May 2016.

38 Deciles 1-3 are low decile schools; deciles 4-7 are medium decile schools; deciles 8-10 are high decile schools.

Table 6: Location

Urban/rural area	Number of schools in sample	Percentage of schools in sample	National percentage of schools
Main urban area	31	67	52
Secondary urban area	1	2	6
Minor urban area	5	11	10
Rural area	9	20	32
Total	46	100	100

Table 7: School size

School roll ³⁹	Number of schools in sample	Percentage of schools in sample	National percentage of schools
Very small	0	0	9
Small	1	2	21
Medium	22	48	39
Large	11	24	20
Very large	12	26	11
Total	46	100	100

39 Roll sizes for full primary, contributing and intermediate schools are: very small (1-30); small (31-100); medium (101-300); large (301-500) and very large (more than 500).

Secondary schools in this evaluation

Table 8: School type

School type	Number of schools in sample	Percentage of schools in sample	National percentage of schools
Secondary (Year 7-15)	8	28	31
Secondary (Year 9-15)	21	72	69
Total	29	100	100

Table 9: Decile

Decile group	Number of schools in sample	Percentage of schools in sample	National percentage of schools
Low decile	9	31	26
Medium decile	12	41	47
High decile	8	28	27
Total	29	100	100

Table 10: Location

Urban/rural area	Number of schools in sample	Percentage of schools in sample	National percentage of schools
Main urban area	25	87	64
Secondary urban area	1	3	10
Minor urban area	2	7	20
Rural area	1	3	6
Total	29	100	100

Table 11: School size

School roll ⁴⁰	Number of schools in sample	Percentage of schools in sample	National percentage of schools
Very small	0	0	1
Small	4	14	27
Medium	12	41	37
Large	12	41	28
Very large	1	4	7
Total	29	100	100

⁴⁰ Roll sizes for secondary schools are: very small (1-100); small (101-400); medium (401-800); large (801-1500); very large (more than 1500).

