

A New Approach

ERO's Early Childhood Education Services Newsletter | AUGUST 2023 | ISSUE #7



Kia ora koutou

Our early childhood education sector is a vital part of the wider education system, forming the foundations for learning that support children throughout their education journey. We want every early childhood service to be a great place where children learn and thrive in an emotionally and physically safe environment.

Our reviews include a focus on accountability and improvement. This newsletter is designed to be a useful resource for early childhood services to better understand what our reviews are focused on with regards to accountability. It includes insights into the common non-compliances we are finding when we visit services, and some of the areas that you can check in your own service today.

If you're keen to learn more, our [website](#) is a great resource for services to understand our role and how we work with you. It includes current education research and insights, for both the early childhood sector and for schools.



Ngā Ara Whai Hua and accountability

Within our evaluation framework [Ngā Ara Whai Hua](#), compliance with regulatory standards and associated licensing criteria is seen as an integral part of providing high quality education and care. It highlights the importance of services ensuring children's safety and wellbeing on a daily basis.

Our focus on accountability includes our [Akanuku | Assurance Review](#) approach that identifies compliance matters to be addressed. Our [Akarangi | Quality Evaluation](#) approach also has a lens on accountability. Where necessary, we will recommend that the Ministry of Education follows up on non-compliance with licensing requirements.

Common non-compliances we're seeing

When we visit services, we are finding some common non-compliances across the four regulatory standards and licensing criteria. Here, we focus on these common non-compliances, and encourage you to check these in your service.

We frequently identify significant non-compliances relating to the safety checking of staff (GMA). There is specific and up-to-date information to help services understand requirements relating to police vetting and safety checking on the [Ministry of Education website](#).

Some of the most common non-compliances we see relate to the Health and Safety Standard. These include securing heavy objects/items and furniture, and systems to implement the requirements for emergency drills and emergency plans, hazard checking, sleep monitoring, administration of medicines, and excursions.

When we look at the Curriculum Standard, the common non-compliances relate to implementing a curriculum that respects and supports the right of each child to be confident in their own culture and encourages children to understand and respect each other.

In the Premises and Facilities standard, suitable bedding and safety of windows/glass are the most frequent areas of non-compliance we identify.

In home-based services, many of the curriculum-related non-compliances are about:

- the range of experiences provided for children and opportunities to enhance and extend their learning and development – both indoors and outdoors, individually and in groups

- communication with parents and whānau and involving them in decisions concerning their child's learning and seeking information and guidance, when necessary, from agencies/services to enable educators and coordinators to work effectively with children and their parents.

Have a look at the [regulatory framework and licensing criteria on the Ministry of Education's website](#) for more information.

Ongoing review and monitoring

Now is a good time to review practices and processes in your own service, and in particular, the areas listed above. We expect that all services prioritise the health and safety of all children in care, take steps and precautions to prevent accidents, and ensure that the premises and all equipment is safe for staff and children, in centre-based, home-based or hospital-based settings. You can find out more about the regulations and licensing criteria on the [Ministry of Education website](#).

On a positive note, our data shows that services respond quickly when we identify a non-compliance, often whilst we are still onsite.

While we know that most services strive to be compliant in all areas, this can only be achieved by service owners, managers and teachers having up-to-date knowledge of the regulations governing the sector. We encourage all services to ensure that compliance, as well as improvement, are ongoing priorities.

Services that are managed by private schools

All early childhood services are licensed in accordance with the Early Childhood Regulatory Standards and associated licensing criteria. We review and evaluate all early childhood services using the same evaluation framework and may identify non-compliances in relation to licensing criteria. There is no variation to and no exemptions from these requirements due to being governed and operated by a private school.

Meet Pat Davey, Director ECE

Tēnā koutou katoa
Ko Pat (Patricia) Davey toku ingoa



Nō Whanganui-a-Tara ahau
Ke te Arotake Matauranga ahau e mahi ana

Pat Davey has been appointed to the role of Director ECE with ERO's Review and Improvement Services. Pat oversees the ECE review programme, ensuring a nationally consistent review model across the motu. Here, Pat talks about her background in early childhood and her path to Director ECE.

I have been employed in ERO for many years starting as a review officer in our Ōtepoti office. During this time, I was fortunate to gain a secondment in Wellington to work with Sandra Collins and Jane White on the Ministry of Education's publication: *Ngā Arohaehae Whai Hua: Self-Review Guidelines for Early Childhood Services*. Following this, I transitioned from Ōtepoti to a position as a review officer in Wellington, later becoming a manager for Review and Improvement Services. During this period, I gained a Post Graduate Diploma in Evaluation.

As an ERO manager, I have worked across most of ERO's offices and more recently as manager for the implementation of ERO's approach to evaluating governing organisations. This approach is for larger national and regional providers of early childhood education and care.

Prior to working for ERO, I was fortunate to have had a wide range of roles and experiences in early childhood, predominantly in Otago. These included working in all-day centre-based services, as a kindergarten head teacher and as a service provider for centre-based and home-based education and care.

In addition, I have worked as a contractor for professional development, undertaken some occasional lecturing and research in family day care and given conference presentations internationally and in New Zealand.

ERO hosts Singapore delegation

Earlier this year, ERO hosted a group of ECE professional leaders from Singapore's Early Childhood Development Agency to share insights into New Zealand's early childhood sector and how ERO undertakes reviews of services.

As senior practitioners and role models for their own home country's early childhood sector, the visitors were keen to hear more about our role in the sector and the methodologies we have developed to support our evaluations. They were introduced to Ngā Ara Whai Hua – Quality Framework for Evaluation for Improvement in Early Childhood Services, as well as our quality evaluation process and resources to support internal evaluation and improvement.

These sorts of discussions are vital, where we are able to share our own experiences and learn from others. It was a useful opportunity to engage with some international ECE professionals and exchange knowledge and expertise.

For more information about ERO and our mahi please visit ero.govt.nz

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