



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

What matters most

for your child and their learning
in an early childhood service



What matters most for your child and their learning

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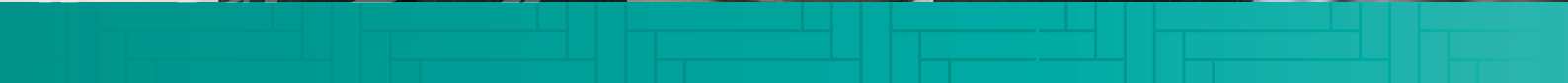
Kia ora

We've written this guide to help you understand what matters most for your child and their learning in an early childhood service. Early childhood is an important time in your child's life when they learn and develop faster than at any other time.

You are your child's first and most important teacher and have a vital role to play in helping them learn. You know your child better than anyone – what they like and don't like; the ways they approach new and different things; and how they learn.

This guide helps you to know what you can expect from an early childhood service and what questions you might ask about the quality of the service. These questions and your observations can help you make decisions and be an active partner in your child's learning.

We've based the guide on what we know matters most in high quality early childhood education. Research shows that quality education and care in early childhood contributes to children's success as lifelong learners.



How to use this guide



You hear



You see



You feel



Your child



Talking points

We've organised this guide around 6 evidence-based indicators of quality in early childhood education. Under each indicator we list the things you might see, hear, or feel when you visit a service. We also suggest some questions you can ask at the service.

You can read more about the indicators for early childhood education in this resource:

Te Ara Poutama – indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most - www.ero.govt.nz/publications/te-ara-poutama-indicators-of-quality-for-early-childhood-education-what-matters-most/

These indicators closely align with the intent of Te Whāriki - the early childhood curriculum in New Zealand.

If you're choosing a service for your child

You can use the prompts to help you make sense of what you see, hear and feel when

you visit. How well does that line up with the 'you see', 'you hear', and 'you feel' statements in this guide?

Ask yourself, which of the statements are most important to you, your child and whānau, and which service matches them best?

If you're thinking about the quality of the service your child currently attends

You can think about which of the 'you see', 'you hear', and 'you feel' statements you experience most strongly?

Ask yourself, are there any of these things that you don't see, hear, or feel? How important are they to you, your child and whānau?

If you're talking to the kaiako/teachers at your child's service

You can use the suggestions in this guide to talk with kaiako/teachers about what you like or appreciate about how they're working with you and your child.

You can use the questions as a starting point for talking about how you feel things are going for your child or how you could be more involved in your child's learning.

INDICATOR #1

Caring, learning-focused partnerships

Children's learning and development in play based contexts is supported through caring, learning-focused partnerships.

Here are some of the things you might notice if this indicator is a strong feature in your child's service.



You hear

- 'Kia ora'
- 'How are you?'
- 'Let's work on your child's pēpeha (people and places you are connected to) together.'
- 'How's [child] doing today?'
- 'We'd love you to share your waiata (song) with us.'
- 'What is [child] interested in at the moment?'
- 'What are some things that help [child] settle when they are upset?'



You see

- Kuia, nannies, and grandparents coming to the service with their mokopuna (grandchildren).
- The service philosophy values whanaungatanga (the importance of relationships and connections).
- The service has space for you to talk with whānau and kaiako/teachers.



You feel

- Children are exploring and learning through play.
- You're welcome at the service.
- Kaiako/teachers are easy to talk to.
- It's okay to ask questions.
- Kaiako/teachers are interested in you and your child's wellbeing.
- Your child will be safe here.



Your child

- Is excited and happy to see friends and kaiako/teachers.
- Looks forward to going to the service.
- Settles quickly when you leave.
- Has plenty of opportunities to play in a range of different activities.
- Feels secure and cared for by their kaiako/teachers.
- Has a positive experience moving from the service to school.



Talking Points

You might ask your child's kaiako/teacher these questions:

- How will you welcome our whānau to this service?
- Why is learning through play important?
- What is my child learning when they play in this way?
- What happens when my child starts school?
- How will you keep me and my whānau informed about my child's learning and development?

INDICATOR #2

Being responsive

Children, parents, and whānau contribute to a curriculum that recognises their languages, identities and cultures.

Here are some of the things you might notice if this indicator is a strong feature in your child's service.



You hear

- Greetings and words spoken in your language.
- 'I've noticed [child] is interested in [a concept]. Do you have ideas about how [child] would like to explore that further?'
- 'What does [this idea] look like for you and your whānau?'
- 'Are there any things you do at home you'd like to happen here?'



You see

- Kaiako/teachers sharing stories about the local area and places of significance to Māori.
- Mihimihi or pōwhiri to welcome new children and their whānau to the service.
- Kaiako/teachers supporting your child to share their interests and what they know with others.
- Celebrations of events and times that are important to children and their families and whānau.
- Tuakana-teina relationships where older children are learning with and supporting younger children.



You feel

- A sense of belonging because of the way the service reflects your cultural values and practices.
- Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are valued.
- Kaiako/teachers are interested and respectful of your culture, language, and ways of celebrating important events.
- Your child's language and culture are valued.



Your child

- Their whakapapa (genealogy) is known and celebrated.
- The things they're interested in matter.
- Kaiako/teachers are interested in who they are and what they bring to their learning.
- They can share what they know and enjoy.



Talking Points

You might ask your child's kaiako/teacher these questions:

- How can I be involved in my child's learning in ways that value their cultural identity?
- I have links to the local marae; can I help you establish a relationship with local hapū?
- How will you share my child's learning with me?
- What will we do if you or I have concerns about my child's progress?
- How will you make sure our culture is recognised in the service (and follow specific things that are important in our culture)?
- My child doesn't speak or understand English very well - how will they be supported?

INDICATOR #3

Equitable opportunities to learn

Children have equitable opportunities to learn through a responsive curriculum consistent with Te Whāriki.

Here are some of the things you might notice if this indicator is a strong feature in your child's service.



You hear

- 'How can we help [child] learn?'
- Kaiako/teachers asking, 'I wonder...?'
- Kaiako/teachers asking children how to do things fairly, or what is the right thing to do.
- Children discussing taking turns.



You see

- Kaiako/teachers working with your child in ways that help your child learn.
- Stories and toys that show genders in a variety of ways – not in fixed roles.
- Children looking after themselves and each other. For example, working together to solve a problem.
- Children looking after their place – tidying up or caring for plants or animals.
- Babies being cared for calmly and quietly and given time to do things at their own pace.
- Children making choices about what and how they do things.



You feel

- Your child is safe, calm and comfortable in the service.
- Everyone is treated fairly, according to their needs.
- Proud of your child's independence.
- Your child has lots of opportunities and time to explore what they're interested in.



Your child

- Has opportunities to care for and learn alongside others, both younger and older than them.
- Takes turns with others and expects their turn.
- Follows routines and knows what is coming next.
- Explores their environment at their own pace.
- Shares their questions and wonderings.



Talking Points

You might ask your child's kaiako/teacher these questions:

- How do you decide what activities you provide for children?
- Does my child have a plan just for them?
- How will you make sure my child is challenged? What if they get bored?
- How do I know they will be safe?
- How much time do they have outside? Do they have access to the outdoors at any time?
- How do you keep things fair for children, and what do you do when children aren't acting fairly with each other?

INDICATOR #4

Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori

Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are valued and an integral part of teaching and learning.

Here are some of the things you might notice if this indicator is a strong feature in your child's service.



You hear

- Kaiako/teachers using words and phrases in te reo Māori as an everyday part of the curriculum.
- Children confidently saying karakia before kai.
- Children singing and leading waiata.



You see

- Kaiako/teachers valuing what whānau Māori bring to the service.
- Kaiako/teachers sharing Māori myths and legends.
- Kaiako/teachers following tikanga Māori, and encouraging children to do so as well.
- Signs and labels in te reo Māori.



You feel

- A sense of belonging and connection when the service promotes te reo Māori and tikanga Māori for everyone.
- Kaiako/teachers recognise that te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are important here.
- Happy that your child is gaining confidence in speaking and understanding te reo Māori.



Your child

- Has opportunities to share waiata and karakia that are valued in their whānau.
- Understands and uses words and phrases in te reo Māori.
- Enjoys singing and moving to waiata and listening to Māori myths and legends.
- Learns to say karakia, and to be quiet and respectful when others are saying karakia.
- Understands tikanga Māori as part of 'how we do things here'.



Talking Points

You might ask your child's kaiako/teacher these questions:

- How will you support my child's reo as they are confident with te reo Māori at home?
- How confident are kaiako/teachers to speak te reo Māori?
- Why is it important for my child to learn about tikanga Māori?
- How can I be involved in learning te reo Māori alongside my child?
- What will happen if I'm not comfortable with my child learning aspects of tikanga Māori, or saying karakia?

INDICATOR #5

Supporting learning and development

Children’s learning and development is supported through culturally responsive and intentional pedagogy.

Here are some of the things you might notice if this indicator is a strong feature in your child’s service.



You hear

- Kaiako/teachers highly engaged and involved with children.
- Kaiako/teachers teaching children new words, helping them to express themselves.
- Kaiako/teachers asking children questions, to help explore children’s thinking more deeply.
- Kaiako/teachers making links between children’s ideas and experiences.
- Children being supported to express their ideas and feelings.



You see

- Children learning about kaitiakitanga (the act of guardianship) and what it means to care for their environment.
- Parents and whānau sharing stories about their whakapapa (genealogy).
- Children learning about their community and going out to visit places in their community.
- Kaiako/teachers encouraging children to try new things that build on their interests and what they’ve been learning.
- Children highly engaged in learning with kaiako/teachers and other children.



You feel

- Your child is heard, and their ideas are valued.
- Your child is respected as an individual, and as a learner.
- You can raise any matters or concerns you have with kaiako/teachers.



Your child

- Learns in an environment where they can see, feel and hear their culture around them.
- Shares their ideas, feelings, wants and needs.
- Returns to activities they enjoy or asks to do them again.
- Talks about how one thing is like or different to another.
- Tries different ways of doing things.
- Sticks with it when solving problems.



Talking Points

You might ask your child's kaiako/teacher these questions:

- How do you get to know my child?
- How will you help my child share their thoughts and feelings?
- How will you help my child learn to problem-solve?
- What sorts of outings and activities will you do in the community?
- How can I help with community outings?

INDICATOR #6

Confident and successful learners

Assessment practices enhance children’s mana and identity as successful learners.

Here are some of the things you might notice if this indicator is a strong feature in your child’s service.



You hear

- ‘What do you think is important for your child to learn?’
- ‘What helps your child when they are learning something new?’
- ‘We’ve noticed [child] is getting really good at [an aspect of their learning]. Have you seen them working on it at home?’
- ‘How do you feel about [child’s] progress with their learning?’
- ‘Would you like us to focus on anything with your child?’
- ‘Do you have any worries about [child’s] learning?’



You see

- Kaiako/teachers listening to whānau and responding to what they want for their child.
- Information about your child’s learning (in a learning portfolio or journal) shows what your child is learning, not just what they’re doing.
- Information about your child’s learning shows their progress over time.
- Kaiako/teachers listening to children as they talk about their learning.
- Your child’s learning celebrated through wall displays and information shared with you.
- Kaiako/teachers changing what they do, based on feedback.



You feel

- The service recognises your child's mana (potential and spiritual power) and capabilities.
- Kaiako/teachers are interested in the hopes and dreams you have for your child.
- What you know about what your child can do is important.



Your child

- Is proud of who they are and of their learning.
- Asks for help, because they know they can learn to do things.
- Is happy or excited when they achieve something they've been trying to do.



Talking Points

You might ask your child's kaiako/teacher these questions:

- How do I share the hopes and dreams I have for my child?
- How do you decide on the goals for my child?
- How often will you share what my child is learning? How will you share it?
- When my child goes to school, what can I share with their new teacher about what they have learnt?
- What will you do if you notice my child needs some more support?

About the Education Review Office (ERO)

The Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga (ERO) is the government department that evaluates and reports on the education and care of children and young people in early childhood services and schools. We are guided by our whakatauki:

*Ko te tamaiti te pūtake o te kaupapa
The child – the heart of the matter*

We want more for our children than the minimum standards. Along with kaiako/teachers, leaders and others, we strive for the best for all children in New Zealand.

ERO has developed indicators of what it looks like when early childhood services are doing their best for all children. These indicators use evidence about what matters most in high-quality early childhood education.

ERO uses these indicators when evaluating how well an early childhood service is providing for children's education and care. We also encourage leaders and kaiako/teachers to use the indicators to evaluate how well they are doing.

This means your child is more likely to experience learning opportunities that are interesting and meaningful to them and feel a greater sense of belonging and wellbeing at their service.

About the early childhood curriculum in New Zealand

Te Whāriki: He Whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa is the early childhood curriculum in New Zealand.

Te Whāriki sets out the responsibilities of kaiako/teachers. These responsibilities include:

- working with parents and whānau to understand their priorities for children's learning
- supporting all children's cultures and languages
- making sure all children can learn alongside their peers.

Kaiako/teachers in early childhood services know a lot about children's development and how to help them learn.

Kaiako/teachers use our early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki, to guide them in this work.

More resources for parents and whānau

ERO

Te Ara Poutama – indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most
www.ero.govt.nz/publications/te-ara-poutama-indicators-of-quality-for-early-childhood-education-what-matters-most/

The Early Learning Years: Quality education for infants and toddlers
www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/ERO-Early-Childhood-Booklet-Full-Doc-v23-WEB.pdf

Continuity of Learning: Transitions from early childhood services to schools
www.ero.govt.nz/publications/continuity-of-learning-transitions-from-early-childhood-services-to-schools/

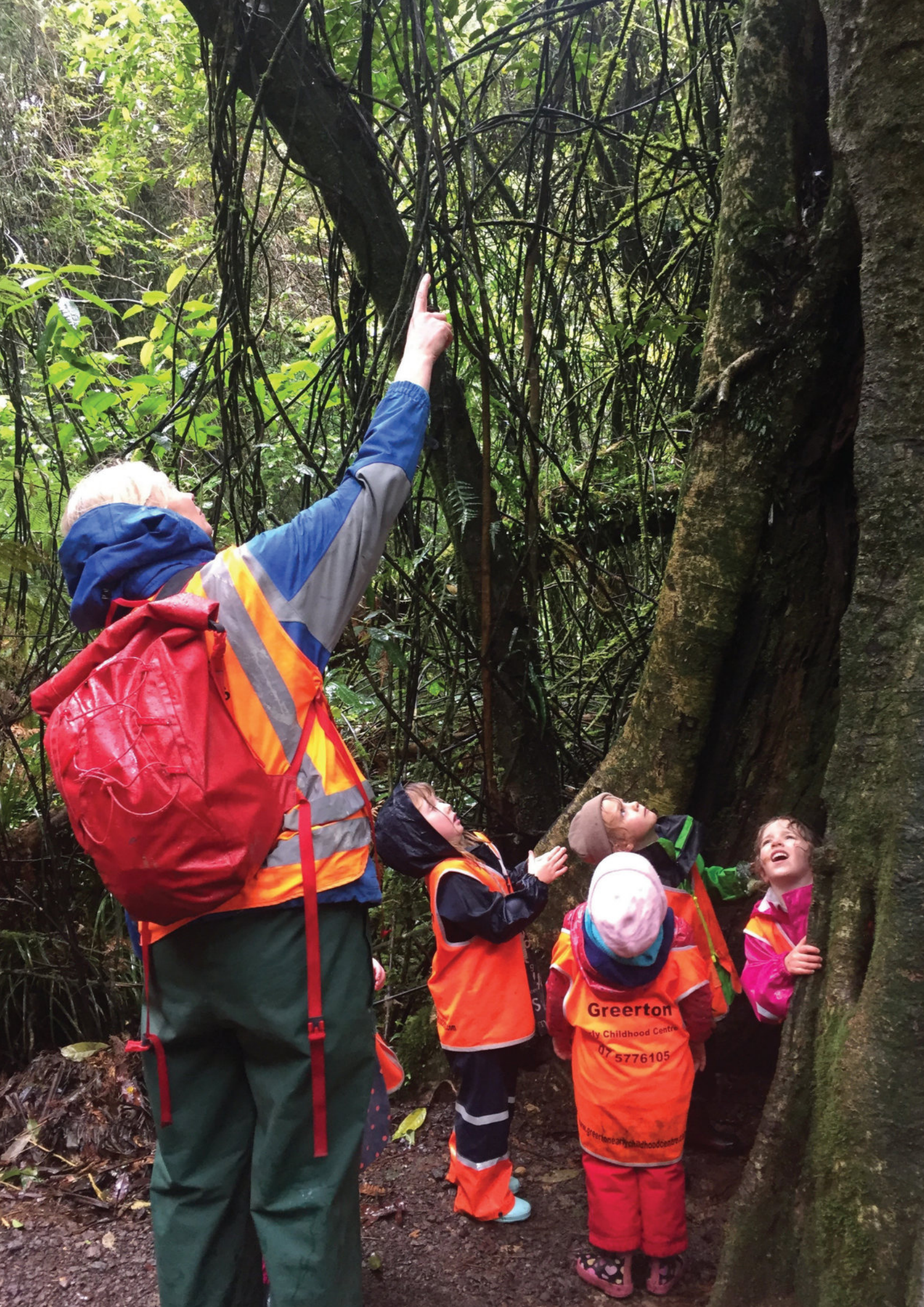
Partners in Learning: Helping your child do well at school
www.ero.govt.nz/our-research/partners-in-learning

Ministry of Education

For Parents: practical information about education for parents and carers
www.parents.education.govt.nz

Te Whāriki Online

www.tewhariki.tki.org.nz





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