

# ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Just Four Kids Southland - Otago

Profile Number: 47147

Location: Southland Otago

1 ERO's judgement of Just Four Kids Southland - Otago is as follows:

Domains: Ngā Akatoro	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
The learner and their learning He Whāriki Motuhake	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
Collaborative professional learning and development builds knowledge and capability Whakangungu Ngaio	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement Kaihautū	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
Stewardship through effective governance and management Te Whakaruruhau	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling

*For an explanation of the judgement terms used and of the evaluation process please refer to the last page of this report. These judgements are based on the evidence provided to ERO during the evaluation.*

Children's health and safety

Improvement required

Taking reasonable steps

## 2 ERO's Judgements

[Akarangi | Quality Evaluations](#) evaluate the extent to which early childhood services have the learning and organisational conditions to support equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners. [Te Ara Poutama Indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most](#) and [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) Improvement Framework \(teacher led services\)](#) are the basis for making judgements about the quality of the service in achieving equity and excellence for all learners. Evaluations for improvement | Ngā Aronga Whai Hua is integrated across all of the above domains.

## 3 About the Service

Just Four Kids Southland, previously known as Just Four Kids Te Anau, is a privately owned, home-based early childhood education and care service. It operates alongside Just Four Kids Ltd. These two networks cover the Otago, North Otago, Queenstown and Southland areas. The director oversees the day-to-day management of the networks. There has been significant growth in the number of visiting teachers, educators and children since the previous ERO report in 2019. Almost all educators have a level 4 early childhood education qualification. Visiting teachers are fully qualified and registered teachers.

This report refers to the Just Four Kids Southland network that serves the Gore, Dunedin, and Queenstown areas. The number of enrolled children that identify as tamariki Māori is just over 10%. Four new visiting teachers support educators to deliver the home-based teaching and learning programme. They provide regular playgroups and excursions for educators, children and their whānau within their local communities.

The service philosophy is focused on children learning through play and respectful relationships in small mixed-age groups. It places emphases on the importance of partnerships with parents and quality early childhood education and care that is underpinned by *Te Whāriki* the Early Childhood Curriculum.

## 4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The 2019 ERO report identified three key improvement actions. They were as follows:

- Support educators to regularly gather parent's aspirations and consistently show how they respond to these to support children in their learning.
- Strengthen appraisal practices by developing a policy with clear expectations including regular observations of practice.
- Continue to develop and embed Treaty-based practices.

Good progress has been made in planning for and actioning the key next steps for improvement. Visiting teacher approaches to gathering parent aspirations and communicating with parents about their child's learning and progress of learning overtime is made clearly visible in visiting teacher reporting. The recently reviewed appraisal policy, procedures and processes include regular observations of practice. The Quality Practice – *Standards for the Teaching Profession* has also been reviewed to ensure an understanding of expectations that align to the Teaching Council requirements. Emphasis is given to Te Tiriti o Waitangi practices in strategic planning. Internal expertise is making a valued contribution to building the collective understandings of te reo ngā tikanga Māori practices across the service.

The further development of understandings of Te Tiriti o Waitangi remain an action for deeper implementation across the organisation.

## 5 Learning Conditions

### The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Children experience supportive whānau groupings within home-based settings that are very responsive to their interests, strengths and capabilities.

- Calm and unhurried interactions allow infants, toddlers and young children, time and space to explore and lead their own learning. They have many opportunities to assert their independence and ideas, develop oral language and deeper levels of thinking.
- Respectful relationships are actively fostered in ways that enhance the mana of the child and nurture their social and emotional well-being and learning.
- Intentional connections to the service educator and wider community enhance the curriculum offered to promote children's learning and social experiences.

### Collaborative professional learning and development builds knowledge and capability | Whakangungu Ngaio

Children's learning is promoted through visiting teachers and educators working as a professional learning community.

- There are many opportunities for ongoing internal and external professional learning and development (PLD) including level 4 educator training, community PLD, and post graduate qualifications.
- There is a collaborative approach to internal evaluation activities that are focused on improving curriculum, and teaching and learning outcomes for children.
- Visiting teachers and educators are increasingly demonstrating professional knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment for learning. However, they are yet to develop shared understandings of Pacific cultures and values to inform curriculum decisions.

## 6 Organisational conditions

### Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leadership prioritises professional practice, resourcing for planning and evaluation of the curriculum, and positive outcomes for learners.

- The building of relational trust at governance, management, leadership and educator level enables collaboration and sustained improvement.
- Visiting teachers mentor and coach educators to strengthen teaching and learning knowledge and capabilities. They provide a differentiated approach to enhance educators' capability to promote equitable outcomes for each child.
- Leaders have developed a collaborative approach to operational review, development, internal evaluation and ongoing improvement across both networks. However, they are yet to make a judgement about quality, effectiveness or value of impact of change on outcomes of learners.

Collective responsibility for the learning and well-being of children, in the context of whānau, is at the heart of decision making.

- Those responsible for governance and management allocate resources in ways that clearly align with services philosophy, vision and priorities for learning.
- The organisation reflects some aspects of the intent of the Articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in its strategic planning, policies and practices. This remains a priority for the service to further develop collective understandings of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to deepen practices across the organisation.

## 7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Just Four Kids Southland - Otago completed and *ERO Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist*. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal obligations related to:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management and administration.

During the review, ERO looked at the service's system for managing the following areas that have a potentially high impact on children's health and safety:

- emotional safety (including positive guidance and child protection)
- physical safety (including supervision; sleep procedures; accidents; medication; excursion policies and procedures)
- suitable staffing (safety checking of staff, ratios)
- relevant evacuation procedures and practices.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.

## 8 Where to next for improvement?


Just Four Kids Southland - Otago will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Further develop understandings of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and deepen practices across the organisation.
- Develop a strategic approach to support professional understandings of Pacific cultures that promote the learning and wellbeing of Pacific children, families and communities.
- Deepen collective understanding of evaluation with a focus on the quality and effectiveness of practice on outcomes for children. This includes regular and planned internal evaluation and strategic goals.

#### Activities undertaken by the evaluation team

- Pre-visit contact with the service provider/manager.
- Reading documentation and records of children's learning and development.
- Scanning the learning environment and resources.
- Observations of interactions and teaching practice while onsite.
- Meetings and / or conversations with leaders and teachers.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

[\*Further information about how ERO evaluates early childhood services is available here.\*](#)



Patricia Davey  
Director of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

18 December 2024

## 9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Home-based service
Number licenced for	100 children, including up to 100 aged under two years old
Ethnic composition	Māori 12%; NZ European/Pakeha 69%, Indian 7%, other ethnicities 13%
Service roll	92
Review team on site	September 2024
Date of this report	18 December 2024
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at <a href="http://www.ero.govt.nz">www.ero.govt.nz</a>	Education Review, August 2019

### Description around ERO's judgement terms

ERO's judgements are based on *Te Ara Poutama* and the *Early Childhood Education Improvement Framework (teacher led services)*.

	<b>Above the threshold for quality</b>
Excelling	The service is excelling in the learning and organisation to support high quality education and care for children
Embedded	The service has embedded its learning and organisational conditions to support ongoing improvement to the quality of education and care for children.
	<b>Below the threshold for quality</b>
Working towards	The service is working towards establishing the learning and organisational conditions to support improvements in the quality of education and care for children.
Improvement required	The service has not yet developed the learning and organisational conditions to support quality education and care for children.