



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Toki Explorers

Profile Number: 47762

Location: Waitoki, Auckland

1 ERO’s judgement of Toki Explorers is as follows:

Domains: Ngā Akatoro	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
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
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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

Toki Explorers is one of four services under the same ownership. The service is in a rural context with children attending from the local community. There are regular opportunities for older children to go on walks in the local forest. Infants and toddlers access the natural environment as part of an exploratory curriculum.

The building has three separate indoor and two separate outdoor areas where children are grouped according to their age and development. The owner is a registered teacher and supports the manager and assistant manager to oversee operations and the curriculum. They are supported by three head teachers, and staff.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

ERO's Akanuku | Assurance report in 2022 identified one key next step relating to deepening teachers understanding of bicultural practice. A good level of progress is evident in teacher's understanding and implementation of te reo Māori, tikanga and waiata within the curriculum.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

The enacted curriculum is mana enhancing. Curriculum and assessment information is beginning to reflect the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki* the early childhood curriculum to make aspects of children's learning visible.

- Various levels of planning for children's learning have been developed that focus on children's interests. Planning does not yet include evaluation which intentionally considers how planning is supporting children's learning in relation to the learning outcomes from *Te Whāriki*.
- Teachers plan for regular whānau events and document parent aspirations for their child's learning. They know children well and respectfully engage with children of all ages.
- Children are provided with opportunities to engage in cultural events and experiences, such as language weeks which recognise their cultures and enable them to understand the cultures of others. Regular opportunities to undertake local forest walks supports them to make connections to the wider community.

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

The conditions which support leaders and teachers to build their professional knowledge are being established. However, evaluation which determines impact on outcomes for learners is not yet visible.

- Teachers take responsibility for their own professional learning and a professional growth cycle has recently been implemented. The team have not yet completed a full cycle, so shifts in practice, and change which impacts learners cannot yet be seen.
- Teachers' reflections of their professional learning are currently aspirational and do not yet support them to critically scrutinise their own practice to make changes utilising their new knowledge.
- Leaders and teachers reflect and inquire into aspects of their practice. They are yet to ask themselves what works and why, as well as what isn't working and for whom, to be able to make evidence-based changes and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and their teaching practices.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders are beginning to enact some aspects of the service's vision, plans and priorities for improvement.

- A philosophy statement has been developed for the wider organisation. The team have not yet considered how the philosophy can be contextualised to be responsive to their community.
- Leaders are taking steps to build the relational trust which enables collaboration for improvement. Changes to the leadership team since ERO's previous review has meant that this remains an area of focus.
- A process of internal evaluation has been developed. It does not yet align to the service's strategic priorities or focus on the areas of quality improvement which matter most at this service.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

A strategic plan focused on business improvement is used across the group of services. The plan is yet to consider targeted improvements for learners.

- The owner identifies and nurtures the potential of future leaders, a practice that has remained consistent across the services in this group. As a result, many teachers have progressed in their professional roles from teaching to leadership positions.
- Policies, procedures and systems are consistently implemented to meet requirements across services.
- Respectful relationships with parents are maintained and leaders work collaboratively with external agencies to support children's learning and wellbeing.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Toki Explorers completed an *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?

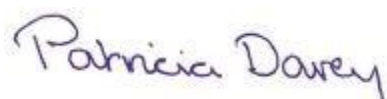
Toki Explorers will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Build shared teacher understanding of the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki* to inform curriculum planning and practice.
- Grow the collective capability of teachers to do and use evaluation for improvement in ways that show shifts in practice and impacts on learners.
- Service leaders to develop strategic priorities specific to the needs of this service to improve provision for learners.

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)

17 February 2025

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	70 children, including up to 20 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	100%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 4%, NZ European/Pākehā 70%, Fijian Indian 5%, Samoan 3%, Tongan 1%, other ethnicities 14%
Service roll	73
Review team on site	August 2024
Date of this report	17 February 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akanuku Assurance Review, October 2022

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)*.

	Above the threshold for quality
Excelling	The service is excelling in the learning and organisational conditions 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.
	Below the threshold for quality
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.