



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Little Acorns Childcare Ltd

Profile Number: 47245

Location: Cloverlea, Palmerston North

1 ERO's judgement of Little Acorns Childcare Ltd 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

At Little Acorns Childcare Ltd children learn in three aged-based rooms with a shared outside environment. The philosophy emphasises relationships built on aroha, manaakitanga and whanaungatanga. There has been significant staff changes in the past two years. The centre manager, supported by a curriculum leader, manage the daily operations of the service.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

Good progress has been made since the 2021 ERO evaluation across all improvement actions. These actions are related to building leadership and collective capability to understand the impact of teaching on children's learning, identifying the progress of strategic goals and learning priorities, and consistently implementing professional growth cycles for teachers.

The centre manager has accessed professional learning and development to enhance her internal evaluation knowledge and understanding. Leaders have successfully built their capability with a clear framework and cycle of internal evaluation in place. The framework supports both leaders and teachers in assessing their contributions to children's learning. Strategic intentions along with the professional growth cycle for teachers are monitored and evaluated through the internal evaluation process, leading to positive outcomes in teacher practice and children's learning.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Children's learning and development is supported through and intentional, responsive play-based curriculum.

- Strong relationships between parents, whānau and teachers actively promote children's social competence and emotional well-being, supporting connections to home and fostering a sense of belonging.
- Children's communication is fostered through intentional teaching of multiple languages. These include verbal and non-verbal communication, New Zealand sign language and te reo Māori across the service.
- Teachers use planning and assessment well to make children's learning visible. Teachers are yet to consistently reference the learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, through these processes to be able to evaluate how well learning priorities are being progressed.

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

Leaders and teachers' positive collaboration to implement their professional knowledge and expertise provides an increasingly consistent curriculum for children.

- A collective approach to learning and improvement is evident through adults in the service. Teachers' development goals are aligned to the service's strategic direction and identified needs.
- Teachers engage in professional growth cycles that includes regular mentoring, observations and meetings to inform quality practice. Teacher's inquiry into their own practice and reflection promotes consistent practices across the service.
- Regular team discussions provide opportunities to build shared knowledge and understanding of teaching practice. Teachers' use this common platform as a basis to plan and extend children's learning based on children's needs.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders promote ongoing improvement in teaching through developing, implementing and evaluating systems, processes and practices.

- Collaborative leadership across the rooms is well supported by service leaders. They intentionally implement processes and practices based on clear, shared expectations.
- Leaders' regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of professional learning promotes consistent teaching practices.
- Relational trust and collaborative practices continue to build through innovative and ongoing communication with parents and whānau, across the team and with external agencies.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

The service philosophy, vision, values, and priorities for learning purposefully guide systems and processes to promote and enhance children's wellbeing.

- Children's learning and development are well-considered in resourcing, decision making and planning for improvement.
- Service leaders are intentional in upholding the mana of Māori children in maintaining connectedness to their cultural identity.
- Leaders understand and implement evaluation processes well. They are taking steps to build the capability of the wider teaching team in this area.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Little Acorns Childcare Ltd 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 Areas of Concern

ERO found area of concern in the service relating to:

- Ensuring that the risk assessment element of the safety checking of children's workers is completed after all relevant information is obtained.

Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008, GMA7A

9 Where to next for improvement?

Little Acorns Childcare Ltd will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Further strengthen teacher capability and knowledge about the intended learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki*, to evaluate how well the curriculum is achieving the priorities for children's learning.
- Strengthen teachers' focus on identifying the outcomes for individuals and groups of children through internal evaluation to better understand what is and isn't working and why.

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.*](#)

Lisa Oldridge

Lisa Oldridge
Director of Early Childhood Education (Acting)

14 March 2025

10 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	62 children, including up to 22 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 41%; NZ European/Pākehā 48%, Tongan 5%, Samoan 3%, other ethnic groups 3%
Service roll	63
Review team on site	October 2024
Date of this report	14 March 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, December 2021; Education Review, December 2018

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.