



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Happy Kiddy Castle Early Learning

Profile Number: 20547

Location: West Harbour, Auckland

1 ERO's judgement of Happy Kiddy Castle Early Learning 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

Happy Kiddy Castle Early learning is one of three services operating under the same ownership. A centre manager with support from a qualified owner, oversees service operations on a day-to day basis. Two team leaders are responsible for the curriculum within the two age-specific rooms. Children enrolled reflect the diverse cultures of the community. A number of Māori and Pacific learners attend the service. The leadership team continues to build their capability and seek ways to improve the Reggio Emilia inspired curriculum. The Reggio Emilia approach sees children as curious learners who learn through relationships and experiences.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

In 2022 ERO undertook an Akanuku | Assurance Review due to a change of ownership. There were two key next steps identified by ERO.

Limited progress has been made to grow teachers' shared understanding of relevant theories and practices in early childhood education and the ways children learn. Leaders acknowledge that they are still working on this improvement goal.

Good progress has been made to provide opportunities for parents to be involved in the service and their child's learning. Parents' aspirations are incorporated into individual child's learning plans as well as the review of the service's philosophy.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Teachers purposefully incorporate a range of teaching strategies to support children's learning and play, and the impact of these strategies is evaluated in assessment and planning information.

- Each child's identity as a learner is enhanced through teachers intentionally including children's home languages into the curriculum and individual assessment records. How teachers respond to children's cultures is not as evident within assessment records.
- Parents' aspirations for their children's learning are collated and used well to inform curriculum planning and design. Learning-focused partnerships are evident through parents' active engagement in Pacific cultural celebrations, contributions to internal evaluation processes and review of the centre philosophy.
- Equitable access, experiences and opportunities are provided for children of all ages and ethnicities. The service is building relationships with external agencies to help them better provide for children with additional learning needs and to remove barriers for their learning.

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

Children's learning is enhanced through leaders and teachers engaging in professional learning that contributes to positive outcomes for children.

- Teachers have regularly opportunities to access professional learning and development. They are highly reflective and evaluative of their changing practice and improved professional knowledge.
- A collaborative internal evaluation process enables teachers to build a shared understanding of good teaching practice. This is helping them to focus on what works well, what doesn't work well, and to identify changes and improvements in their practice and how this makes a difference for children.
- A process for a professional growth cycle is established. The service is yet to document feedback from the mentor to teachers and leaders to formalise this process.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders are developing their capability to support quality teaching through a strength-based approach that is resulting in increased sharing of responsibilities within the teaching team.

- Leaders provide targeted professional learning and development for teachers that is consistent with the service's strategic goals and philosophy.
- Leaders enact the service's philosophy, vision and priorities. They allocate time and resources for ongoing discussions amongst the leadership team.
- Leaders actively support the wellbeing and learning of some children. They are beginning to identify and remove barriers for children's learning.

Leaders have developed a strategic plan and self-assess progress in relation to each focused area to better support the direction of the service.

- The service is developing systems for regular monitoring of licensing requirements. The co-owners and the centre manager as the governance team, continue to monitor changes to requirements to ensure these are enacted at the service.
- The co-owners and manager develop, implement and evaluate systems, processes and practices that promotes improvements for children.
- The service is taking steps to develop stronger learning-focused partnerships with the wider learning community, including Ministry of Education, local schools and external agencies.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Happy Kiddy Castle Early Learning 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?

Happy Kiddy Castle Early Learning will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Make children's languages and cultures more evident within assessment records and the environment.
- Record mentor feedback to teachers and leaders to formalise the mentoring process and to build the capability of teachers.

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)

28 February 2025

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	50 children, including up to 14 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	100%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 13%, Chinese 25%, Filipino 13%, NZ European/Pākehā 13%, Indian 10%, Pacific 10%, South African 10%, other ethnic groups 13%
Service roll	48
Review team on site	November 2024
Date of this report	28 February 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akanuku Assurance Review, July 2022; Akanuku Assurance Review November 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)*.

	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.