



# ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Kai Kids Preschool

Profile Number: 47473

Location: Kaitangata

1 ERO's judgement of Kai Kids Preschool 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

Kai Kids Preschool is a privately-owned and operated early learning service located in rural South Otago. A new centre owner has oversight of governance and operations while a newly appointed head teacher has responsibility for the day-to-day operations and curriculum. The service has recently made changes to provide a separate indoor and outdoor learning space that caters for those children up to the age of two years.

## 4 Progress since the previous ERO report

Progress on the four key next steps identified in the 2021 ERO report has been varied owing to the change of ownership, leadership and a focus on meeting and maintaining regulatory compliance.

Good progress has been made in increasing teachers' intentionality to provide a language-rich environment. Oral language was identified as a valued learning priority and teachers' knowledge and capabilities have been supported with professional learning opportunities. Teachers' interactions with children are highly responsive and support children's developing communication skills.

Work has begun to respond to the remaining next steps however limited progress has been made to date. This includes deepening understanding of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, better showing intentional teaching strategies in relation to the valued learning outcomes and continuing to develop a bicultural curriculum.

## 5 Learning Conditions

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

Children's learning is supported and enriched by highly responsive and respectful teacher interactions.

- Teachers actively promote children's social and emotional competencies, support them to make choices and follow their interests. A wide range of learning opportunities within the play-based curriculum foster risk-taking, active exploration and critical thinking.
- Infants and toddlers play and learn in specifically designed indoor and outdoor spaces that allow for one-to-one unhurried interactions. Their rapidly changing developmental needs are well catered for.
- Teachers know children and their whānau well and engage respectfully with them, using this knowledge to treat each child as an individual.

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

Leaders and teachers have built and embedded their professional knowledge and capability to design and implement an inclusive, responsive curriculum.

- The team are improvement-focused and use a range of quality improvement practices such as teacher inquiry, research and spontaneous review. They are using this information to build shared understandings.
- Leaders and teachers access a range of regular professional learning and local networks that support ongoing improvement and changes to practice.
- Teachers reflect on their practice, however they are yet to evaluate the impact of these improvements to know what the outcomes for children are.

## **6 Organisational conditions**

### **Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū**

Leaders are establishing the conditions to develop capability to support quality teaching.

- Leaders have established relationships with, and participate in, local education and leadership groups that support the ongoing development of leadership skills and knowledge.
- The head teacher has oversight of teacher practice, inquiry and assessment for learning. They provide some formal and informal feedback to teachers.
- Agreed expectations on how teachers assess, plan and evaluate children's learning progress over time are not yet developed.

### **Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau**

The centre owner is taking steps to develop an understanding of effective governance and management to better inform decision making and changes to the service.

- An annual plan guides the service's operations. Children's learning and wellbeing are considered in resourcing and decision-making by management.
- Maintenance of service operations has been the primary focus during recent ownership and leadership change. Currently, most ways of knowing what is working well or not are informal, and there is little monitoring or evaluation of new initiatives.
- The local curriculum was previously developed aligned to the service's learning priorities and philosophy. A review has recently begun to update these and determine if they still reflect the parents' and local community's vision.

## 7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Kai Kids Preschool 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 areas of concern in the service relating to ensuring:

- earthquake and lockdown drills are completed on an at least 3-monthly basis
- documentation shows parents' prior approval of adult: child ratios on regular and planned excursions.

Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008, HS8, HS17

## 9 Where to next for improvement?

Kai Kids Preschool will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Develop, implement and monitor clear expectations for teachers to guide consistent assessment, planning and evaluation practices. This includes evaluating the effectiveness of teaching strategies and their impact on learning outcomes for children.
- Continue to build collective capability to engage in effective internal evaluation, to allow leaders and teachers to better know about outcomes for children as a result of improvement actions taken.

#### 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)

16 April 2025

## 10 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	42 children, including up to 10 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 22%, NZ European/Pākehā 59%, South African 5%, Samoan 3%, Cook Island 3%, other ethnic groups 10%
Service roll	33
Review team on site	December 2024
Date of this report	16 April 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at <a href="http://www.ero.govt.nz">www.ero.govt.nz</a>	Akanuku   Assurance Review, June 2021; Education Review, November 2021

### 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 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.
	<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.