

# ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

**Early Childhood Service Name:** Tuakau's Little Stars Early Childhood Centre

**Profile Number:** 10174

**Location:** Tuakau, Waikato

1 ERO's judgement of Tuakau's Little Stars Early Childhood Centre 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

Tuakau's Little Stars Early Childhood Centre is a family-owned service. A centre manager, operations manager, and curriculum lead work together to support and guide teachers. They are responsible for the daily operations and management of the service, as well as curriculum planning and design. Children play and learn in two age-defined areas.

The philosophy prioritises aroha me manaakitanga (love and care); whanaungatanga (family); kaitiakitanga (care for the environment); and ngaiotanga (professional practices) to guide kaiako.

## 4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The 2021 ERO report identified three improvement actions: incorporate a cultural lens, and include child, whānau and wider community voices in planning and internal evaluation processes; encourage learning-focused partnerships through strengthened processes to gather parents' aspirations for their child's learning; and further develop a responsive curriculum that responds to children's language, culture and identity.

Good progress has been made in all areas. Leaders have a documented process showing how all improvement actions have been planned, actioned, and monitored. Parents' aspirations inform centre priorities for children's learning. Ongoing monitoring demonstrates improvements in teaching practice, including in relation to enhancing the responsive curriculum. Progress is reflected in the professional growth cycle, appraisal processes, evaluation findings, and in assessment, planning and evaluation documentation.

## 5 Learning Conditions

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

Children experience a responsive curriculum that effectively promotes their learning and development and reflects the service's philosophy.

- Service leaders provide clear expectations and guidance to inform curriculum design and implementation. A collaborative approach with whānau helps identify priorities for children's learning, while younger children benefit from the care and aroha provided to them.
- A range of intentional teaching strategies foster a sense of belonging for children, supporting their growth and enhancing their capabilities. Kaiako are knowledgeable about children's abilities and are responsive to their interests, needs, and strengths.
- There is variability in kaiako understanding and experience of assessment and evaluation to illustrate children's learning and progress over time.

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

Service leaders intentionally promote a collective approach to targeted professional learning and development.

- Regular professional learning and development provide opportunities to share new knowledge, contributing to a shared understanding across the teaching team and strengthening teaching strategies. This supports key areas of focus, including numeracy, literacy, oral language development, and science.
- An established system to support the professional growth cycle and appraisal process provides clear guidance and sets expectations for leaders and kaiako.
- Kaiako inquiries are well-supported and align with the service's strategic plan, internal evaluation, and both professional and personal interests. Coaching and mentoring from service leaders influence teachers' thinking and changes in their practice.

## 6 Organisational conditions

### Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

A successful distributed leadership approach helps build capability across the team, resulting in high relational trust that enables collaboration for improvement.

- Leaders and kaiako maintain a positive working environment that supports collective responsibility and a positive team culture. Low staff turnover ensures consistency for children and whānau.
- Leaders provide access to both internal and external expertise to build capability and foster leadership within the team. Regular engagement with the wider community supports kaiako and children's ongoing learning and wellbeing.
- Internal evaluation is collaborative and focused on improvement. Leaders recognise the need to build their evaluative capability to monitor and assess the impact of improvement actions on outcomes for all children.

Governance provides the framework for effective decision-making in the service.

- The service's strategic plan effectively identifies priorities and goals focused on the learning and wellbeing of children, guided by the perspectives of children, kaiako and whānau.
- Ongoing monitoring of the service's strategic priorities informs decision-making and the allocation of resources.
- The service has refined systems and processes to support induction, performance management, and professional learning and development opportunities. These increasingly contribute to ongoing leadership and management opportunities for kaiako.

## 7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Tuakau's Little Stars Early Childhood Centre 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?

Tuakau's Little Stars Early Childhood Centre will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Develop consistency of assessment practices across the teaching team for recording and evaluating the complexity of children's learning and progress over time.
- Improve the evaluation capability of service leaders to support a shared understanding of evaluation for improvement to promote positive learner outcomes.

#### 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)

21 May 2025

## 9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	48 children, including up to 10 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 27%; NZ European/Pākehā 65 %; other ethnic groups 8%
Service roll	48
Review team on site	February 2025
Date of this report	21 May 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at <a href="http://www.ero.govt.nz">www.ero.govt.nz</a>	Akarangi   Quality Evaluation, July 2021; Education Review, October 2017.

### 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.