



# ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: The Children's Garden

Profile Number: 46999

Location: Stoke, Nelson

## 1 ERO's judgement of The Children's Garden 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

The Children's Garden is a privately-owned service. Co-owners manage daily operations, one as a principal and pedagogical leader, and the other supports repairs and maintenance including administrative support. The team is supported by a curriculum leader and a lead infant kaiako. The team are a mix of provisionally certificated and experienced qualified kaiako and includes a kai creator/chef.

The philosophy is underpinned by the teachings of Dr. Emmi Pikler placing an emphasis on nature, relationships and a peaceful and harmonious environment where self-confidence, kindness and respect are reflected.

## 4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The 2021 ERO report was an Akanuku | Assurance Review. The service was able to provide evidence through the ongoing review process to show they had addressed areas of non-compliance and were meeting the regulatory standards. No key next steps for improvement were identified for the service.

## 5 Learning Conditions

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

The Pikler-inspired curriculum, clearly focused on relationships, forms the basis for learning and care.

- Respectful relationships are evident in interactions between kaiako and children through small-group sustained and independent play, and rituals of care. The principal assigns dedicated kaiako to support children and whānau at the service during times of transition.
- The learning environment authentically reflects nature and incorporates loose parts and open-ended resources, which enable opportunities for children to create and explore. To build consistency of kaiako practice, leaders focus on observing and supporting kaiako to respond to children's urges and curiosity as key aspects of the philosophy.
- Planning and assessment practices show variability in how well teachers articulate and incorporate whānau aspirations and children's cultures, languages and identity within individual learning documentation. Leaders have self-identified that planning, assessment and evaluation practices is an area that requires improvement.

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

Mentoring and external professional learning supports kaiako to work collaboratively to implement a curriculum that reflects the service priorities.

- Leaders and kaiako are well supported to access relevant professional learning aligned to the philosophy.
- Leaders regularly meet with provisionally certificated kaiako and the teaching team to build their understanding and capability to implement a responsive curriculum aligned to *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, and service philosophy.
- Mentoring discussions support teachers to reflect on their practice. Leaders need to clearly identify the impact of professional learning and mentoring on outcomes for children.

## 6 Organisational conditions

### Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

A collaborative leadership team sets clear expectations for mentoring and supporting kaiako to build their capability.

- Collaborative self-review and professional growth systems are well implemented. Building leaders understanding of internal evaluation is required to enable the teaching team to evaluate the impact of their teaching on outcomes for children.
- Leaders ensure parents have opportunities to learn about key aspects of the curriculum and the service philosophy.
- Leaders and kaiako are yet to collaboratively develop with parents and the learning community their priorities, aligned to *Te Whāriki*, to further develop the curriculum in ways that clearly reflect their learning aspirations.

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

Governance decision making prioritises the allocation of resources that clearly align with the service's vision and philosophy for children's learning.

- Considerable resourcing is provided to support leaders and kaiako to build their understanding and implementation of a curriculum that aligns to the service's philosophy.
- Those responsible for governance and management, ensure collaboration, accountability and opportunities for distributed leadership. These are evident through the service's annual plan, regular ongoing staff meetings, implementation of the philosophy and aspects of health and safety.
- Some policies and practices are not yet clearly aligned or informed by up-to-date knowledge of the licensing criteria.

## 7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of The Children's Garden 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?

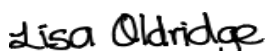
The Children's Garden will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- In partnership with parents and whānau, develop a shared understanding of their learning priorities for their children to better inform the curriculum.
- Build leadership capability to better understand and use effective internal evaluation to show shifts in teaching practice, and the impact on outcomes for children's learning and wellbeing.

### 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  
Director of Early Childhood Education (Acting)

5 June 2025

## 9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	30 children, including up to 12 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	100%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 11%; NZ European/Pākehā 50 %; other European 19%; Samoan 6%; Tongan 3%; other ethnic groups 16%
Service roll	38
Review team on site	March 2025
Date of this report	5 June 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, October 2021; Education Review, February 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)*.

	<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.