



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Little Ants Childcare

Profile Number: 46962

Location: Waiuku

1 ERO’s judgement of Little Ants Childcare is as follows:

Domains: Ngā Akatoro	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
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

Little Ants Childcare Centre is a privately owned service that provides care and education for children from infancy through to school age, across three distinct learning areas. In response to staffing changes, the experienced owner has taken a more active role in managing day-to-day operations, working closely alongside the centre manager and three lead teachers who oversee the age-based rooms. The service's philosophy is grounded in the values of respect, resilience, and relationships.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

ERO's 2021 report identified two quality improvement actions:

- To strengthen learning-focused partnerships with parents and whānau Māori to identify priorities for their children and integrate these into a curriculum that acknowledges their languages, cultures, and identities.
- To build teacher capability and collective capacity to use systematic internal evaluation to identify and build on what is working well and for which learners.

Limited progress has been made in these areas and there is minimal evidence to demonstrate that actions have been undertaken to address these priorities. These areas for improvement remain active and relevant. The service continues to receive external support to develop their understanding of the use and purpose of internal evaluation.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Children experience nurturing relationships at this service that support their learning and development.

- Teachers maintain respectful relationships with children fostering their developing social competence. Infants and toddlers experience calm, unhurried caregiving that supports their sense of security. Their preferences to play alone or alongside others are acknowledged and well supported by teachers.
- Children are provided with some opportunities to engage in sustained conversations during play. A range of intentional teaching strategies is used, including open-ended questions and deliberate guidance from teachers that supports children's cooperative play and promotes the development of their problem-solving skills.
- A new planning process is in place but requires further refinement, as teachers have yet to include curriculum evaluation to assess the impact of their teaching on children's learning. Some steps are being taken to build a shared understanding of the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum to better guide teachers' assessment, planning and evaluation of children's learning.

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

Leaders and teachers are at an early stage of developing their understanding of relevant theories, including those that underpin *Te Whāriki*.

- Leaders and teachers are in the early stages of building their cultural competence to inform and strengthen teaching practices. They have recognised a need to more explicitly reflect children's identity, languages, and cultures in individual assessment and planning, which remains an area for further development.
- Staff have access to relevant internal and external professional learning opportunities. However, a gap in evaluating the impact of new learning on teaching practices and outcomes for children limits the service's ability to drive improvement.
- An established process is in place for teacher appraisal and professional growth cycles, supporting ongoing development aligned with Teaching Council standards and service priorities. Currently, evidence demonstrating teachers' learning and progress, and the impact of new learning on their teaching practice is limited.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders are working collaboratively to enact the philosophy, service vision, and priorities for the wellbeing and learning of all children.

- The owner and manager collaboratively lead day-to-day operations as part of a leadership succession plan. Together, they create opportunities for teachers to lead in areas of individual strength to support the enactment of the service's philosophy, vision and curriculum priorities.
- While the service has developed a process for internal evaluation, its implementation in practice remains unclear. Leaders and teachers are working to build a shared understanding of using an evaluation process to support ongoing improvement.
- Leaders have established a well-considered strategic plan that includes a shared vision, and specific objectives focused on continuous improvement. They continue to monitor and review the plan regularly, with some evidence of evaluation to inform ongoing decision-making.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

Governance and leaders are in the early stages of building relational trust with the teaching team, which is beginning to support collaboration and a more positive team culture.

- Leaders actively facilitate positive collaboration between teachers, parents, and whānau. Children's learning and wellbeing are central considerations in resourcing and decision-making.
- Governance supports initiatives that contribute to positive operational outcomes. They are engaged in ongoing policy review and are developing human resource systems to help continuous improvement.
- Governance is beginning to gather parents' perspectives to inform priorities around children's learning and development. Leaders have established a well-considered plan for staff professional development based on the learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki* to improve existing curriculum practices.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Little Ants Childcare 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?

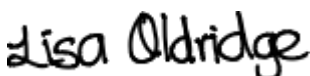
Little Ants Childcare will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Develop and refine the internal evaluation process, ensuring leaders and teachers build a shared understanding of how to do and use evaluation to support ongoing improvement.
- Build teachers' capability to use the learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki* to clearly document individual children's learning and evaluate how their teaching impacts children's outcomes.
- Plan and implement a culturally responsive curriculum that acknowledges the identities, languages, and cultures of all children, in partnership with parents and whānau.

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)

14 July 2025

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	60 children, including up to 15 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	100%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 12%; NZ European/Pākehā 70%; Indian 9%; Zimbabwean 8%; Chinese 3%.
Service roll	42
Review team on site	April 2025
Date of this report	14 July 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Education Review, September 2021; Education Review, May 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.