



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Piccolo Park Early Learning Centre

Profile Number: 46285

Location: Mount Wellington, Auckland

1 ERO's judgement of Piccolo Park Early Learning 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
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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

Piccolo Park Early Learning Centre is one of four services owned by the same company. Governance provides shared operational guidelines, a strategic vision, and policies to guide practice. In the last 12 months, the service has experienced significant staff changes to the teaching team. Most teachers are new graduates. A centre manager works with and alongside a relatively new teaching team and is responsible for the day-to-day operations and management of the service. Currently the owners lead curriculum design, implementation, professional learning and development (PLD) in consultation with centre leaders and teachers.

A common philosophy across the four services values working in partnership with each child's family and providing opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritage of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Its underpinning beliefs are that all children are unique, and their play makes a big impact on their development and learning. Teachers aim to extend their play, within a curriculum based on *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

The learning environment has three separate indoor spaces to accommodate the ages of children attending. A shared outdoor environment is provided for toddlers and young children.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The 2019 ERO report identified two key next steps. The first was for leaders to implement the centre's bicultural partnership and build teachers' understanding and confidence in using te reo Māori more in the programme and documentation. The other key next step was for leaders to ensure portfolios continue to reflect children's learning over time with suggestions about next steps in their learning, and links to whānau aspirations.

Good progress has been made to build teachers' confidence to use te reo Māori in both the programme and documentation. Limited progress has been made to build bicultural partnerships and leaders have identified this remains as a key focus for development.

Good progress has been made to ensure portfolios continue to be reflective of children's learning and some possible next steps are identified. Leaders gather some whānau aspirations and these are used in children's learning portfolios.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

The service has embedded guidance and expectations for curriculum design to support children's learning and development.

- Children including infants and toddlers experience learning environments that foster their developing sense of belonging, independence and decision-making. They are increasingly familiar with ways to manage themselves and take steps towards becoming responsible for others.
- Teachers' differentiated knowledges and experiences as beginning teachers has resulted in variability in assessment documentation. While documentation recognises children's capabilities some is descriptive in nature identifying what children are doing, rather than specifying the learning.
- Teachers use some intentional teaching strategies to support nurturing, respectful relationships with children. They gather and use parent and whānau aspirations to identify some priorities for children's learning aligned to the learning outcomes described in *Te Whāriki*.

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

Management and service leaders increasingly support and enable teachers to build their professional knowledge, expertise and cultural competence to implement a curriculum that is responsive to children.

- Leaders access relevant PLD to support teaching teams and to role model practice, teaching and learning strategies. Leaders and teachers collaboratively decide who will attend what specific PLD aligned to individual professional growth cycles to build capability.
- Service wide PLD intentionally shows how children are viewed as confident and capable learners. In most cases teaching and learning assessment documentation are strengths-based and positively show children's personalities and learner identity.
- New knowledge, information and research obtained from PLD is shared across the service. These enhance shifts in teachers thinking and are used to inform practice and curriculum.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Management and service leaders work collaboratively to enact the vision, strategic goals, working plans and priorities for learning.

- Teaching teams are well supported by management and leadership to understand and reflect the organisation's philosophy in practice. A key focus is to increase aspects of te ao Māori to work effectively with whānau to support the service's developing bicultural knowledge and practice.
- Those in management receive effective external mentoring to foster their professional growth. Regular coaching and mentoring by management are building leadership capability to enable them to provide appropriate support for teaching teams.
- There is a useful system and process to undertake internal evaluation, but this is not well understood or effectively implemented by leaders. A shared understanding of what happens at each stage or phase of the process has not yet been established.

Children's learning and wellbeing are well-considered in the decisions and allocation of resourcing with a clear focus to support improvement.

- Service leaders share with whānau the vision, plans and some areas for improvement. Supporting whānau participation and contribution continues to be strengthened increasing the potential to foster broader educational and social outcomes for children.
- Scheduled review of policies and procedures supports services within the group to identify what areas might need addressed and to improve practices.
- Strategic plans and processes are in place. However, the system has not yet been developed to monitor and evaluate these.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Piccolo Park Early Learning 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?

Piccolo Park Early Learning Centre will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Increase the consistency of teacher practices by developing teachers' shared understanding of learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki* and in assessment documentation consistently identifying and prioritising children's learning.
- Develop systems and processes to monitor the progress of strategic goals and service work plans.
- Build the evaluative capability of management and leaders to clearly identify and understand the difference they are making for children's learning and wellbeing, with a focus towards improvement.

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)

7 July 2025

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	70 children, including up to 12 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 18%, NZ European/Pākehā 32%, Indian 16%, Chinese 12%, Samoan 10%, Tongan 10%, Filipino 8%, Mexican 8%, Niuean 4%
Service roll	50
Review team on site	February 2025
Date of this report	7 July 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Education Review, October 2019; Education Review, November 2015

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.