



## Sector Briefing

May 2025



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# Executive Summary



Te Rito Maioha is an Incorporated Society of members committed to high quality early education for every child. Established in 1963, we are an influential leader in shaping today's early childhood sector through advocacy, policy, and delivering tertiary education qualifications and professional development programmes for current and future early childhood and primary education teachers.

## Initial teacher education

Te Rito Maioha is a registered Private Training Establishment (PTE) with the highest rating for a tertiary provider in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are accredited and approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to deliver a range of early childhood and primary school undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate qualifications (levels 5-9), including specialist kaiako education, both nationally and internationally.

Each year, on average, we graduate between 350-400 early childhood education (ECE) teachers|kaiako and, more recently, primary kaiako. Our initial teacher education (ITE) delivery is field based meaning all our graduates work or volunteer in an ECE service or school whilst studying every week and are ready to teach in ECE and school environments on graduation.

Our bicultural kaupapa, te reo Māori me ōna tikanga, is embedded throughout everything we do and teach. We are committed to ensuring the success of our Pacific nation students across the motu by growing authentic relationships that embrace students' whānau and communities across our programmes.

## ECE advocacy

Through our membership we advocate for early childhood education services and the kaiako who provide education to thousands of infants, toddlers, tamariki and young people. Our members are drawn from a diverse range of community-based, privately-owned, kindergarten and homebased early childhood education services and teachers.

As a membership organisation, we also advocate for the ECE sector. We believe there are many opportunities to enhance the overall health of the ECE sector by improving the supply and quality of the ECE workforce, ultimately benefiting tamariki and their whānau by:

1. **Improve child-teacher ratios**  
Our ECE ratios are currently among the worst in the OECD. This needs to change to ensure tamariki receive the quality education, care, and attention they need to thrive, learn, and stay safe.
2. **Develop and implement a Strategic Teaching Workforce Plan**

We need a Strategic Teaching Workforce Plan to attract, retain, and grow a professional, culturally responsive ECE teaching workforce within Aotearoa New Zealand. This means prioritising ongoing investment in initial teacher education across all education sectors and ensuring supply and demand for teachers is well managed through this plan.

3. **Sufficiently fund ECE services**  
Provide sufficient funding for ECE services to deliver quality education for tamariki and ensure kaiako are paid fairly and equitably – without placing the burden of high fees on parents.
4. **Replace the ECE funding model**  
The current ECE funding model is outdated and not fit for purpose. The sector urgently needs an investment strategy and funding model that better supports today's working whānau, tamariki and ECE services to deliver quality education.
5. **Simplify regulations**  
Regulations should ensure tamariki safety and quality ECE delivery without burdening ECE services or kaiako with repetitive, labour-intensive paperwork from multiple government agencies that keep them from tamariki education and wellbeing.

ECE in Aotearoa delivers public value and is a public good. Research demonstrates that investing in ECE is a cost-effective strategy for promoting economic growth, demonstrating that for every \$1 spent in ECE, there is a return of \$9+ in the learning life. Aotearoa has also moved on from the outdated idea that ECE is simply babysitting and there is significant research to back up the need for investment in a healthy, highly educated ECE sector, with an appropriate regulatory regime with guidelines that support and enforce good practice. It is also proven that well-supported children in ECE transitioning to school have a better chance of success in their school years.

Access to high quality ECE is a right for every young child and as such, we have a responsibility to ensure whatever service children attend is of the highest quality. There is significant evidence to show that the qualifications of staff matter.

As of June 2024, 4,409 early childhood licensed providers made up Aotearoa's ECE Network. The diversity within our sector enables providers to deliver significant public value and public good for the youngest citizens of our country and provide parents/caregivers with choices for the kind of ECE provision that suits their children, while enabling parents to participate in the economy. However, the diversity of provision is currently under threat and is not being supported by policy, regulations, or the funding model.

Currently the government funds the sector through an overly complex and outdated bulk funding model. Each alteration to the funding equation creates unintended consequences and is based on ratios that are outdated, unsafe, and do not reflect best practice or even common practice within the sector.

Those ratios, established decades ago without any evidence or research, are inadequate for addressing the needs of tamariki in ECE. It is essential to update and improve these to align with current knowledge and understanding of early childhood development and avoid unsafe and or harmful conditions for children. We are urgently advocating for a new funding model that is fit for purpose and that supports the established evidence that ECE is a public good and affects our youngest citizens for a lifetime.

Te Rito Maioha is committed to high quality, teacher-led ECE, which is crucial when teaching the basics brilliantly and giving tamariki the best start to their life-long learning journey.

Both best-practice and research support the use of qualified professionals, as opposed to unqualified staff as the teachers for our tamariki<sup>1</sup>. To end the ECE teaching shortage, we must value and attract teachers by publicly valuing their teaching skills, their knowledge of a child's development from zero to five and appreciate the training and the role ECE kaiako have.

To ensure the basics are taught along with ensuring tamariki develop the emotional, social, and cognitive skills needed to become lifelong learners, a meaningful Education Workforce Strategy and Action Plan is required to address teacher shortages from ECE to primary to secondary. Te Rito Maioha stands ready and willing to support the government to develop a meaningful and long-term strategy. We believe this is the only sustainable and practical solution, to enhance teaching practices with an appropriately trained professional workforce including avoiding a future shortage crisis.

There are some fundamental elements that are required of qualified ECE teachers. They must:

- have undertaken at least undergraduate study for at least three-years or equivalent or more
- understand the unique heritage, language, identity and culture of learners including te reo and Te Tiriti o Waitangi

- have knowledge and understanding of how children learn and how they progress in their learning
- cater for each child, knowing their strengths and weaknesses and adapting teaching strategies to meet the child's learning aspirations
- understand the pedagogy underpinning the curriculum which informs intentional teaching practice
- be equipped to effectively implement the curriculum
- establish age-appropriate learning environments to facilitate the learning needs of each child and promote engagement
- have knowledge and skills to assess, progress and report children's learning
- understand and meet diverse learners' needs
- build stable and enduring relationships with whānau
- continue to develop their pedagogy and teaching practice
- have effective teaching practice and high levels of ethical behaviour
- maintain the currency of their teaching knowledge and practice (certification)
- be accountable to their profession and uphold professional standards.

Further, there is significant research<sup>2</sup> that shows the qualifications of adults working with tamariki matters and is a key indicator of quality<sup>3</sup>. The goal of a 100% qualified workforce is supported by this research which demonstrates a direct link between the qualifications of staff and the quality of education and care provided.

In summation, both best-practice and research supports the use of qualified professionals, as opposed to unqualified staff as the teachers for our tamariki<sup>4</sup>.

The sector is also concerned that the shortage of qualified ECE teachers will worsen over time if we do not recognise the qualifications, skills, and competence of ECE teachers. ECE teachers are teachers and are just as qualified and vital as primary teachers.

**Te Rito Maioha are in a unique position, as a sector leader with a significant ECE membership of both early childhood services and ECE kaiako as well as a tertiary provider delivering ITE for both ECE and Primary.**

**As such, we regularly engage with ministers across the education sector, including the Minister for Education, Minister for Vocational Education and Training, and Associate Minister for Early Childhood Education.**



# The Issues



## The issues relating to tertiary provision for initial teacher education and postgraduate study:

1. Tackle teacher shortages with a meaningful Education Workforce Strategy and Action Plan to attract, retain and develop a professional, culturally responsive ECE and primary teaching workforce from within Aotearoa New Zealand.

While there are systemic shortages of primary teachers, this briefing focuses on the shortage of ECE teachers. We note that ECE workforce has been in crisis for a few years with little to no delivery on a New Zealand Education Workforce Strategy and Plan.

A skilled teacher workforce is essential to delivering high-quality ECE services that can support them to lift achievement and teach the basics brilliantly achieving the best outcomes for tamariki and their whānau. There is increased recognition that the education and care of tamariki is complex work, and the attitudes of previous decades that ECE is just babysitting has been thoroughly rejected and outdated globally.

Quality ECE requires degree qualifications and ongoing professional development. Programmes and curriculum design using the gazetted (Te Whāriki: Early Childhood Curriculum) delivered by qualified kaiako, are particularly effective in improving outcomes for tamariki living in vulnerable circumstances and supporting tamariki to read and write when they reach school.

Using Te Whāriki, trained teachers can support children in their development of pre-literacy concepts while children are spontaneously and engaging in their play. In fact, it is considered that the development of pre-literacy skills and knowledge of literacy is foundational to the literacy activities that the child will be expected to engage in their primary education.<sup>5</sup>

A qualified workforce delivers excellent, rich, and varied learning experiences that nurture and support the emotional wellbeing of our tamariki, along with establishing foundational traits for learning, such as curiosity, persistence, creativity, and co-operation.

In response to the teacher shortage and perhaps to address costs, there has been a suggestion from the National Party that a policy change reducing the percentage of qualified teachers required in ECE and potentially replacing ECE degree qualifications with lower qualifications could rectify the current teacher shortage. There are real concerns with this extreme approach. There are ways to address teacher shortages and removing or reducing the standard of degree qualifications is not one of them.

To reduce the impact of the ongoing kaiako shortage in the ECE sector, there must be a transparent plan that addresses the causes, not just the symptoms. If we look to other sectors, a shortage of engineers, scientists or doctors would be met with a plan to increase the number of those professionals being educated, retained, or brought into the country.

A teacher's role is critical to a child's learning and development and there is significant research which links this to quality ECE outcomes that can ensure further education can unlock a better future for New Zealand. As a sector, we certainly can share other solutions and work with the government to address teacher shortages without reducing the standard of the profession.

We strongly recommend a focused effort to tackle the current kaiako shortages with a meaningful Education Workforce Strategy and action plan. Such a plan must attract, retain, and develop a professional, culturally responsive ECE, primary and secondary teaching workforce from within Aotearoa New Zealand, and we need to continue with the current recruitment incentives including ensuring immigration settings and programmes are in place and accessible. Ultimately, we need to prioritise ECE teacher education, and increase the number of students enrolled in ECE initial teacher education programmes with a well-supported national campaign.

ECE regulations require 50% of adults in ratioed positions to be qualified teachers. Ngā Huaraki Arataki – ECE strategic plan 2002 – 2012 and He taonga te Tamaiti – Early Learning Action Plan 2019 – 2029 both aimed to raise the regulatory minimums firstly to 80% then to 100%. The delay was to allow time to implement policy settings that would both incentivise services to reach the targets, as well as support them to maintain them.

The majority of education and care services receive funding rates that indicate 80% of the adults they employ in ratioed positions are qualified teachers. This demonstrates those service providers have committed resources, time, and energy to increase the number of qualified teachers in their services beyond the regulated minimum - and continue to do so.

There were 23,699 qualified ECE kaiako in 2024, just over 70% of the sector. Retaining those teachers is critical, as is their status as professionals. Pay parity is the most significant factor in retaining those teachers - it is already underway but there is no certainty that this will continue to be funded, and more importantly fully funded!



A workforce strategy needs to align the work that is already completed in the Teaching Council's Leadership Strategy and Professional Growth Cycle Framework and recognise that better working conditions (such as better teacher to child ratios) are required across the sector to attract kaiako. Further, it needs to recognise the importance of the newly gained Pay Parity for ECE kaiako was a good step towards recognising the value of kaiako, which is a fundamental step required to attract people into the profession.

We believe there needs to be a vision and action plan to build and support the teaching profession 0-18 years old, including equity from ECE to primary to secondary school teachers. After completing a degree in initial teacher education, graduates should be able to choose ECE or primary (after specialised graduate study in each sector) without being disadvantaged by pay rates or differing levels of ongoing professional development.

ECE kaiako like their school counterparts should be supported to grow with professional development and non-contact time. Investment in professional learning and development for ECE leaders and kaiako will increase the quality of early learning for all tamariki, make teaching in ECE more attractive and help alleviate the current teacher shortages.

We suggest investigating the number of staff in centres in training and provide targeted support to enable those people to complete and gain their teacher education qualification. We know approximately 30% of staff in ratioed positions are unqualified and Ministry of Education data is able to identify where those staff are. Of those staff members, significant numbers will be in training. Supporting those in training to complete their qualification, and supporting others into training could be a targeted extension to what happens currently i.e.: scholarships, and the provision of professional time.

We acknowledge and fully support the improvements that have been made to initial teacher education programmes, and as a tertiary provider we place high expectations on our graduates to enter the teaching profession in both ECE and primary schools with the skills and competence to be highly qualified teachers and teaching ready. Our students are workplace ready to teach as they are in ECE services and classrooms every week of their study prior to graduating.

We support the focus in the Early Learning Action Plan on establishing a planned and coherent education ecosystem that is supported, accountable and will ensure ECE services are sustainable over time.



There are also grave concerns within ECE, that due to successive governments placing little importance on ECE, Aotearoa New Zealand's international reputation for having a world class ECE curriculum, Te Whāriki, and quality ECE has over time diminished. This also affects workforce retention and needs to change. ECE is not childcare - it is early childhood education, and this is backed up by research. It is also internationally recognised that the development of a child's learning in the first 1,000 days is vitally important for their ongoing learning and education.

## **2. Improve child-teacher ratios – so that tamariki can thrive, learn and be safe with quality education and attention from teachers.**

The current ratios, established decades ago without any evidence or research, are inadequate for addressing the needs of tamariki in ECE. These ratios were put in place in the 1960s, a time when outdated practices such as smoking in cars and corporal punishment were considered normal. It is essential to update and improve these ratios to align with the current knowledge and understanding of early childhood development.

In early 2024, we delivered a petition to Parliament. Details of that petition can be found [here](#).

Lower ratios are crucial for providing individualised care and attention to each child. With a reduced ratio of one teacher for every four children under the age of three, teachers can dedicate quality time to nurture and support each child's unique needs. Individualised interactions foster stronger bonds, promote social-emotional development, and enhance educational outcomes.

Higher ratios make it challenging for teachers to create a safe and nurturing environment for young tamariki. Caring for a larger number of infants or toddlers within the current ratios can lead to chaos and be overwhelming for both the child and the teacher and can induce toxic stress. By reducing the ratio, teachers can ensure that tamariki receive adequate care, including mealtimes, nappy changes, and rest, while also creating a loving and supportive space for learning.

Lower teacher-to-child ratios have a positive impact on educational outcomes. With fewer tamariki to care for and educate, teachers can better observe and understand each child's developmental progress. They can identify areas of strength and areas that need further support, allowing for more targeted and effective teaching strategies. This individualised approach contributes to improved cognitive, social, and emotional development in young tamariki.

Juggling multiple responsibilities and attending to the various needs of children simultaneously is mentally and physically exhausting. This constant strain on teachers increases the likelihood of burnout and makes it challenging for teachers to sustain their careers in the field. Moreover, the demanding conditions associated with high ratios discourage individuals from pursuing careers in early childhood education. Maintaining lower child to teacher ratios is crucial to alleviate stress, reduce toxic stress, improve staff retention, and attract new educators to ensure a nurturing environment for young tamariki.

With the above in mind and aligned to attracting more people into the teaching profession we need the Minister to support positive campaigns to attract and retain teachers in ECE and primary.



# Our priorities for the tertiary education sector



Initial teacher education (across all sectors – ECE, primary and secondary) has been identified as a priority for tertiary education investment, and this should remain a priority for the foreseeable future to support workforce shortages. With the suggestion of policy and/or qualification changes need to ensure there are no unintended consequences to tertiary, primary or ECE initial teacher education and professional growth through postgraduate study.

The tertiary education portfolio is split across three ministers, who we will regularly engage with. Minister Reti is responsible for higher education and pastoral care; Minister Simmonds is responsible for tertiary education funding; and ITE sits with Minister Stanford.

There also needs to be continued and improved support and commitment to fund EFT delivery for initial teacher education providers who are doing a great job attracting students into initial teacher education from early childhood education, primary to secondary including Māori and Pacific nations.

We agree that the 100% target for qualified teachers in teacher led ECE centres would lead to demand for more qualified ECE teachers. To satisfy this demand, ITE needs to be made less financially onerous for prospective ECE teachers, while having the ability for providers to potentially count second and third-year teachers in training as “qualified” staff. That should provide an incentive for both providers and teachers and help to alleviate the current teacher shortage.

Given this, we supported changes to tertiary study including offering one-year fees free study which has lowered costs to students for part of the required period of study. However, we were concerned about outcomes. While there has been increased enrolment with the free first year, the key is to ensure that learners are retained and complete their course or qualification. If courses aren't completed, overall Education Performance Indicators become negatively impacted as learners exit after their free year of study and exit without completing their qualifications. We

are therefore pleased to see that this redesigned policy improves the incentive for students to complete their qualification whether it be one year or three years in duration. This adjustment also has the benefit of addressing some cost wastage in fees free.

Workforce Development Councils (WDC) are set to be disestablished as part of a wider Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector redesign. The WDC's impact on ECE ITE is yet to be known, but we know qualifications at certificate and diploma levels (i.e., levels 3, 4 and 5) are also important in working towards a pathway into a teaching career in ECE and degree entry.

Kathy Wolfe, Chief Executive of Te Rito Maioha, was pleased to be involved as part of the initial WDC Design Reference Group, ensuring the focus on education is not diluted or discarded for those wishing to achieve a vocational qualification before deciding to pathway into higher study such as initial teacher education. Our relationship with the WDC has been positive and their current role ensures the sector has faith in the WDC to uphold quality and requirements for the ECE sector.

The extent of change, churn, and public expense in recent years has been excessive, and risks the reputation and confidence of Aotearoa New Zealand's education system.

We want a stable, financially viable VET and ITP sector for Aotearoa. As a PTE, we welcome a high-quality and diverse tertiary education sector.

We support:

- Increasing student living cost support allowances;
- Incentivising ITE students with bonding schemes, which pay study costs in return for a committed period of work in ECE or school;
- Supporting equity of access to ITE for Māori and Pasifika students.





# Te Rito Maioha



**Te Rito  
Maioha**  
Early Childhood  
New Zealand

## OUR PURPOSE TŌ TĀTOU KAUPAPA

To inspire, empower and educate teachers and learners, embracing cultures and languages to ensure every child's potential is ignited.

Kia whakahihiko, kia whakamana, kia hoatu rā te mātauranga me te āheinga ki ngā kaiako me ngā taura e pōwhiritia ana ngā ahurea, ngā reo rangatira o te ao, kia tutūngia e rātou te pito mata kei ia tamaiti.

## OUR COMMITMENT TE PAE TATA

We are a bicultural organisation committed to advocacy, teaching, research, promotion, and delivery of world class teacher education for tamariki, whānau, kaiako, ECE services and schools. We respond by being connected, contributing and agile to ensure successful learning happens together.

He rōpū tikanga-a-rua ā Te Rito Maioha, ko tā mātou e manawanui nei, he whakaako, he rangahau, he whakatuārā, kia tautoko ngā tamariki, ngā whānau, ngā kaiako, me ngā whare kōhungahunga katoa. Kia pai ai tā mātou mahi, ka mau kaha nei ki ngā tūhononga, kia kakama tātou ki te ako ngātahi, kia pūmau ki te angitu.



## OUR GUIDING BELIEFS NGĀ WHAKAPONO ĀRAHITANGA

Every child|tamaiti has the right to high-quality education that complements and supports their and their family|whānau and community life.

Every child |tamaiti in Aotearoa New Zealand has the right to know and enjoy the dual cultural heritage of Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners along with their own cultural heritage.

People working in early childhood and primary education have access to high-quality teacher| kaiako education, advice, information, resources, to aide their decision-making that affects their profession, children|tamariki and families|whānau.

That teacher education is focused on cultivating reflective practitioners. Teachers should be well-versed in content knowledge and pedagogical strategies and continuously reflect on their experiences, adapt their practices, and engage in lifelong learning.

Our education programmes empower kaiako and educators to meet the diverse needs of their children|tamariki and contribute positively to their communities.

## OUR VALUES NGĀ UARA

**Making a difference** – Te puawaitanga o te tangata

**Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi** – E matua whakapono ana tātou ki te Tiriti

**Including everyone** – Whakawhanaungatanga

**Being accountable** – Kia tāea te hāpai i ngā kaupapa katoa ahakoa te aha

**Caring and connecting** – Manaakitanga

**Innovating** – Whakahihiko hinengaro

*Illustration: Ngā Karekare Oranga - The waves of Wellbeing*

*The current/ripples from the spring (Puna) carrying energy, support and wellbeing (Ora).*

# More about Te Rito Maioha



Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand (ECNZ) is an Incorporated Society of members committed to high quality early childhood education for every child. Established in 1963, the organisation is an influential leader in shaping today's early childhood sector through advocacy, policy, tertiary education qualifications and professional development programmes.

We advocate for early childhood education services and the kaiako who provide education to thousands of infants, toddlers, and children. Our members are drawn from a diverse range of community-based, privately-owned, kindergarten and homebased early childhood education services.

The organisation is governed by a Council made up of elected and appointed members, led by a National President and supported by a National Kaumātua. Our national office is in Thorndon, Wellington and our teaching staff are employed at 11 locations throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

In 1990 we changed our name and a new constitution reflected our commitment to more equitable outcomes for all tamariki. A further name change in 2015 and refreshed brand indicates our commitment to strongly champion bicultural understanding and practice, which is evident through the content and design of our programmes, teaching, and learning. The organisation is committed to Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation for its programmes and organisational practices and activities. Our bicultural kaupapa, te reo Māori me ōna tikanga is embedded throughout everything we do and teach and we are a fully blended delivery provider (mostly online, noho marae and practicums). We are committed to ensuring the success of our Pacific nation students across the motu by growing authentic relationships that embrace students' aiga across our programmes. Te Rito Maioha is also a registered Private Training Establishment (PTE) with the highest Category One rating for a tertiary provider. We are accredited and approved by New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to deliver a range of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate qualifications (levels 4-9), including specialist kaiako education, both nationally and internationally.

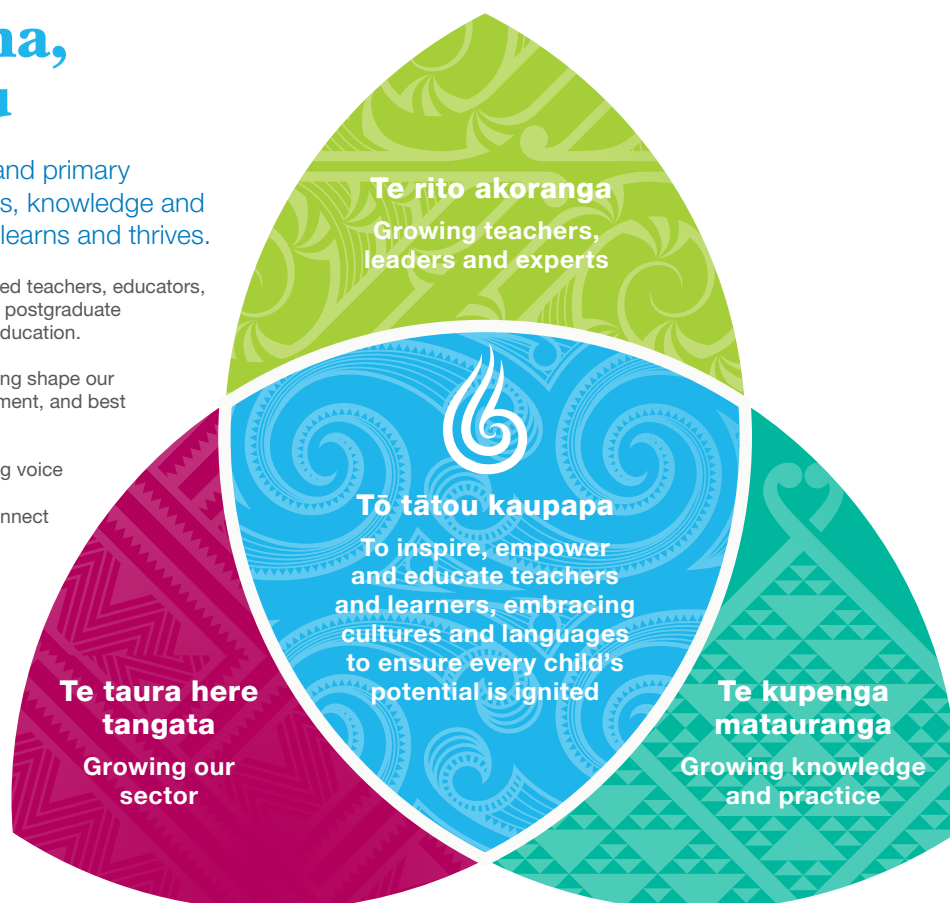
## Te Rito Maioha, te piki kotuku

We are leaders in early childhood and primary education - growing kaiako, leaders, knowledge and bicultural practice so every tamaiti learns and thrives.

As a tertiary education provider, we grow valued teachers, educators, leaders and experts with diploma, degree and postgraduate qualifications in early childhood and primary education.

Our research, new knowledge and fresh thinking shape our education programmes, professional development, and best practice nationally and internationally.

As a membership organisation, we are a strong voice for young tamariki and quality early childhood education. We advocate for our sector and connect our members with the latest issues, policy and professional development.





Since 1980 Te Rito Maioha has delivered undergraduate programmes. From the mid-2000s we commenced delivery of graduate and postgraduate programmes in early childhood education. In 2021 we launched delivery of an undergraduate initial teacher education qualification for the primary sector.

We are committed to achieving high-quality teaching and learning by:

- increasing teachers' |kaiako knowledge of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Aotearoa New Zealand's dual cultural heritage;
- providing access to online blended delivery of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate tertiary education programmes leading to recognised and approved qualifications;
- promoting quality teaching and leadership through ongoing professional learning and development programmes;
- providing a range of unique resources and services to our members.

In 2015, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published a report that brought together the shared views of children's early learning and development. These views hold true today.

*The report states: "Children's experiences early in life have a profound and long-lasting impact on their future. Helping all children receive positive and nurturing support in their early childhood is highly valued by members of the OECD Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Network. The more positive the early childhood experiences, the greater the benefit to a caring and responsible society.*

*The early years (from birth through the transition to elementary school to approximately eight years of age) are a period of intense learning and development, when tremendous changes occur in*

*the brain over a short period of time. In the first year of life, the architecture of the brain takes shape at an astounding rate – approximately 700 new neural connections are being built per second. Studies have shown that this process is not entirely genetically predetermined, but rather is significantly influenced by children's early experiences with people and their surroundings and their access to pertinent and meaningful stimulation.*

*This influential period (0-8 years) is also characterised by the unprecedented physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth (e.g., language and other communication) abilities. One way to significantly decrease gaps in achievement later in life is to provide enriching learning experiences to children well before they enter school.*

*High quality ECEC settings can have profoundly positive impacts during the most sensitive early phase of children's development and learning. Access to high quality ECEC settings can play a part in reducing social inequities, not only in the early years but in future years.*

*High quality, accessible ECEC settings can enhance women's opportunities for employment, improve gender equity and reduce social risk and family poverty. It is important, when ECEC policies and programs are being developed, that concepts of affordability and access be prime considerations.*

*The ability to derive social, long-term health and economic benefits, as well as the ability to contribute constructively to the community, hinges on the early years. Studies show that positive early experiences lead to improved determinants of health, resulting in fewer instances of depression and better health outcomes, throughout the life cycle. For this reason, the economic benefits of investments in the early years are well-documented".*



The reality is that research and practice have shown that ECE is one of the single biggest influences on a child's life-long educational achievement. ECE also supports better employment, income, criminal justice and health outcomes, and a more productive and cohesive society. Investment in ECE is more cost effective than investment at any other stage of education.

American economist Professor Jim Heckman, and others, have shown that investing in ECE is a cost-effective strategy for promoting economic growth. He has shown that for every \$1 spent in ECE, there is a return of \$9 in the learning life.<sup>6</sup>

The sector is willing and able to be part of the solution. We need to get past the elephant in the room and accept that ECE is delivered by a range of providers and create an equitable funding system, including pay parity, that reflects the diversity of the sector and works for everyone, but more importantly for parents and whānau.

**If at any point you have any questions about ECE, initial teacher education (ECE and Primary) or Te Rito Maioha in general, please do not hesitate to contact our Chief Executive, Kathy Wolfe on 021 448 626 or [kathy.wolfe@ecnz.ac.nz](mailto:kathy.wolfe@ecnz.ac.nz).**



#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Allen, L., & Kelly, B. B. (Eds.). (2015). Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation. Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. <https://doi.org/10.17226/19401>

<sup>2</sup> OECD (2012), Quality Matters in Early Childhood Education Care: Finland 2012, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264173569-en>

<sup>3</sup> Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) - Research Brief OECD

<sup>4</sup> Allen, L., & Kelly, B. B. (Eds.). (2015). Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation. Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. <https://doi.org/10.17226/19401>

<sup>5</sup> Martineau, C. (2017). The multidimensional nature of literacy. Retrieved from: <https://medium.com/literate-schools/the-multidimensional-nature-of-literacy-c73f49220288>

<sup>6</sup> <https://heckmanequation.org/>



