

Collectively Kids Limited Education Review

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This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

About The Centre

Location	Mt Albert, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	20478
Type	Education and Care Service
Number licensed for	30 children, including up to 8 aged under 2
Roll number	45
Gender composition	Boys 23 Girls 22
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 33, Māori 5, Samoan 2, German 2, other ethnicities 3
Review team on site	April 2009
Date of this report	8 June 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, September 2005 Accountability Review, August 2002 Accountability Review, December 1998 Assurance Audit, 1994

The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Children at Collectively Kids learn in a caring, positive environment where cooperative relationships support their wellbeing and education. The flexible programme allows children opportunities to initiate individual and group play experiences that take their interest. Teachers skilfully extend children's learning through shared planning and taking advantage of teachable moments during interactions with children. Children are very settled, happy and highly engaged.

The Collectively Kids community has experienced considerable change over the past year. The well established centre was relocated from Khyber Pass to a new site in Mt Albert in early 2008 and a new licence also enabled staff to enrol children under two years old. More recently, the centre experienced several changes in the previously stable staff team. The licensee's empowering leadership, and commitment to communicating with, and involving, staff and parents throughout the changes, has helped to ensure a successful transition. Collectively Kids continues to provide high quality education and care for children and their families.

The new centre is very attractive and is well set out, with a good flow between indoor and outdoor play spaces. Play areas are carefully designed to allow children freedom of movement and choice of activities. Children are involved in gardening and participate in sustainable initiatives in the wider community. They are active participants in the strong environmental commitment of the centre's community.

Positive relationships between staff support shared responsibilities for providing a responsive programme for children. In this collaborative teaching environment, it is timely to revisit the centre commitment to increasing the use of te reo and tikanga Māori in the programme.

Respectful, open communication with parents continues to be a positive feature of the centre. Most of the community input into the direction of the centre and children's education is facilitated through staff conversations with parents, surveys and family contributions to children's learning records. The licensee recognises that more focussed consultation with all parents/whānau regarding their aspirations for their children is a useful next step to guide the development of the centre.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

Review Priorities

The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of Collectively Kids was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the centre to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the management and staff. This discussion focused on existing information held by the centre (including self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to positive outcomes for children at Collectively Kids .

All ERO education reviews in early childhood focus on the quality of education. For ERO this includes the quality of:

- the programme provided for children;
- the learning environment; and
- the interactions between children and adults.

ERO's findings in these areas are set out below.

The Quality of Education

Background

Collectively Kids early childhood centre has experienced considerable change over the past year. Following consideration of limitations with the existing site in Khyber Pass, the well established centre was relocated to a new site in Carrington Rd, Mt Albert, in early 2008. The new centre is well set out with a good flow between indoor and outdoor play spaces. The new buildings have provided sufficient space to extend the provision of care and education to children under two years old.

More recently, three new staff have joined the teaching team, some in part-time roles, replacing staff who had left. This has been the first significant change of staff for four years. Any negative impact of these changes on children's wellbeing and education has been minimised through the licensee's careful, inclusive management style.

Staff and parents are very positive about the success of the move to the new site. Most of the families involved with the centre have supported the changes and their children continue to attend Collectively Kids.

Staff have been involved for the last two years in a teacher learning research initiative focused on sustainability.

During the course of the review it was apparent that centre management and teaching practices were well underpinned by and reflective of the principles of Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum. The Te Whāriki principles, of family and community, relationships, empowerment and holistic development, therefore form the framework for reporting the findings of this evaluation.

Areas of good performance

Relationships. Positive, cooperative relationships that support children's wellbeing and education are evident in:

- ongoing communication between staff during sessions, checking on each other's needs and sharing information about children's interests and development;
- close attention by staff to fostering children's emotional and social development through planned and spontaneous teaching;
- caring, tuakana/teina support of children for each other, which is actively encouraged by adults;
- parents' appreciation of the ways in which staff genuinely value their input; and
- thoughtful, appreciative comments recorded by staff in recent review processes, demonstrating a growing sense of collaboration amongst the newly formed team.

Children demonstrate a high sense of security and belonging in this caring centre environment.

Holistic development. The centre programme is carefully designed to cater for all aspects of children's development and includes:

- staff identifying children's social development needs and using teaching strategies to promote children's emotional growth and their development of positive relationships;
- educators encouraging children's literacy development through the appropriate inclusion of oral, reading and writing opportunities in the programme. Children's retelling of stories indicates familiarity and enjoyment;
- supporting children's creative development through access to a wide range of materials for play, art focuses, and the availability of many spaces for imaginative play;
- children engaging in physical activities as part of their play, in the centre, and on

excursions in the local community; and

- children experiencing the natural world through their involvement in environmental activities, including gardening and sustainability initiatives.

Teachers skilfully build on children's prior learning and development by providing them with a wide variety of challenges that are appropriate for their age.

Empowerment. The centre licensee provides skilful leadership that inclusively involves staff, parents and children as partners in a responsive centre programme. This empowerment is evident in:

- children's freedom to engage in activities they choose and to follow interests, supported by a flexible approach to routines and programme implementation;
- teachers' astute knowledge of individuals, enabling them to be appropriately responsive to teachable moments with each child;
- children engaging in learning conversations with peers and adults, thus contributing to an ongoing flow of ideas and language that supports children's cognitive development;
- use of children's scrapbooks for meaningful dialogue between families and staff about children's development and learning needs;
- a shared approach to centre leadership roles, supporting an environment of collaboration with and openness towards staff and community;
- the careful orientation of new staff, providing time for them to understand the centre culture and to engage in professional development; and
- the inclusion of staff, through meetings and virtual discussions, in developing the centre culture and plans.

The whole centre community works effectively in a partnership that is focused on children's care and education.

Family and community. Staff actively promote the inclusion of families and the community in the education of children. Significant features of this commitment are:

- open communication, with staff having a genuine desire to engage in dialogue with families about the specific needs of children;
- acknowledgement, through programme practices, of the diverse backgrounds and cultures that children bring to the centre;
- skilful inclusion of key areas of interest in children's family lives outside the centre in

learning conversations with the children;

- involvement of the centre community in environmental and sustainability initiatives; and
- supportive connections established with the new community around the centre.

Parents acknowledge the responsiveness of staff in including families as partners in the care and education of their children.

Areas for improvement

Advancing children's interests. Teachers take much of the responsibility for supporting children's interests during the programme, by providing planned activities and resources for the children. This approach could now be extended to allow children more scope to determine the direction of their own learning. Staff are currently undertaking a major review of teaching practices and have begun to think about some strategies to promote children's self assessment and planning, including seeking children's ideas for mat time and arranging for a staff member to work with groups in the afternoon on specific topics of interest. To support this programme direction, teachers should now consider:

- reflecting more deeply on children's demonstrated interests to consider the actual focus of the interest from the child's perspective, determining the starting point for exploration and extension;
- developing a process, when a group or common interest emerges, to plan experiences and activities to enrich children's understanding; and
- based on identified interests or topics, establishing areas in which resources and materials are accessible for children to revisit so that they can generate their own learning through self-initiated engagement with learning materials.

Such approaches would further extend children's learning and empower them to develop positive dispositions for life-long learning.

Physical development. The centre licensee recognises that the outdoor play area needs further equipment to provide safe physical challenges to extend the development and skills of older and physically active children.

Areas Of National Interest

Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole through its national reports. This information will be used as the basis for long term and systemic educational improvement.

Māori Children

As part of this review ERO evaluated the extent to which this service carries out a process to identify and respond to the aspirations and expectations of the parents and whānau of Māori children and focuses on the potential of Māori children to develop as competent and capable learners.

Areas of good performance

Relationships. Reciprocal relationships are well established in the centre. There is an emphasis on children relating positively to others and on tuakana/teina relationships. Kaitiakitanga practices are also well established and have led to ongoing developments in children's environmental awareness and their involvement in sustainable practices.

Realising potential. All children are supported as competent and capable learners. Where staff become aware of the aspirations of Māori parents, they support the child's learning in those areas. The licensee agrees that she and staff could talk more with parents and whānau of Māori children about specific aspirations they may have for their children and about ways in which staff could best support the child's development in these areas.

Bicultural commitment. The centre philosophy and policy statements clearly signal a commitment to promoting New Zealand's bicultural heritage and to implementing practices related to the Treaty of Waitangi. A languages and culture policy has been developed as a way of raising the profile of bilingualism and multilingualism in the centre. Some aspects of this commitment are evident in centre practices. Some aspects of tikanga Māori are embedded in programmes. For example, sitting on tables or touching heads is not permitted and karakia are recited before meals. Children and staff are familiar with waiata and some books in the centre have Māori themes.

Areas for improvement

Consultation. The licensee recognises that more effective consultation with all families regarding the direction of the centre is a useful next step for the service. A priority within this process is for staff to ensure that consultation strategies are effective in including Māori families so that whānau share their ideas, concerns and aspirations for their children with

staff. Such communication should enable teachers to be more proactive in supporting Māori children to realise their potential.

Tikanga Māori. The licensee recognises that the impetus to increase the promotion and implementation of tikanga Māori that followed the 2005 ERO review has not been sustained. The relocation of the centre and staff changes have contributed to the limited progress that staff have made towards achieving the centre goal of increasing the levels of te reo and tikanga Māori used in programmes. It is timely for staff to make a renewed commitment to including te reo and tikanga Māori as an integral part of the programme experienced by Māori children.

Management Assurance On Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the licensee and staff of Collectively Kids completed an ERO Centre Management Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they have attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- administration;
- health, safety and welfare;
- personnel management;
- financial and property management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on outcomes for children:

- emotional safety (including behaviour management, prevention of bullying and abuse);
- physical safety (including behaviour management, sleeping and supervision practices; accidents and medication; hygiene and routines; travel and excursion policies and procedures);
- staff qualifications and organisation; and
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

ERO's investigations did not identify any areas of concern.

Recommendation

ERO and the centre managers agreed that:

6.1 centre managers should continue their work to further empower children, teachers and families as partners in ensuring ongoing improvements in the programme provided for children attending the centre.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

signed

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

8 June 2009

8 June 2009

To the Parents and Community of Collectively Kids

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Collectively Kids.

Community Page

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When ERO has reviewed an early childhood centre we encourage management to inform

their community of any follow up action they plan to take. You should talk to the management or licensee if you have any questions about this evaluation, the full ERO report or their future intentions.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the centre or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve quality of education for children in early childhood centres; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on outcomes for children and build on each centre's self review.

Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on four review strands.

- Quality of Education - including the quality of the programme provided for children, the quality of the learning environment and the quality of the interactions between staff and children and how these impact on outcomes for children.
- Additional Review Priorities - other aspects of the operation of a centre, may be

included in the review. ERO will not include this strand in all reviews.

- Areas of National Interest - information about how Government policies are working in early childhood centres.
- Compliance with Legal Requirements - assurance that this centre has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of centre performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to this centre.

Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a centre is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this centre.