

Appendix A: Terms of Reference – Advisory group: early childhood education quality sector-wide

Quality

ERO has found that it is the interweaving of many aspects of practice that contribute to good learning opportunities for infants, toddlers and young children. In high quality services it is the interrelationship between the following features, rather than any one on its own, that underpins the quality of education and care provided:

- leadership
- philosophy
- vision
- relationships and interactions
- teaching and learning
- assessment and planning
- professional learning, qualifications and support
- self review
- management. *

Remit

There is widespread acceptance that good outcomes for children depend on high quality early childhood education (ECE) and that poor quality ECE can harm children.

The ECE Taskforce report noted that, although many ECE services in New Zealand are of very high quality, our tolerance for poorly performing services is too great. Lifting the quality of poorly performing services will narrow the variation and improve quality overall. The Taskforce called for increased sector accountability.

The ECE system quality advisory group is being convened to consider practical ways to lift the performance of poorly performing ECE services, including the appropriate mix of monitoring, support and sanctions.

The ECE Taskforce also identified a leadership role for the sector in creating a professional and continuously improving environment. The advisory group will consider ways for the sector to lead quality and system performance improvements. The advisory group will also seek to build partnerships between government and the sector and find ways to build a strong, unified sector.

Membership

The membership of the advisory group will contain a mix of relevant experience and expertise. This should include: organisational and operational sector experience; demonstrated understanding of the components of quality in ECE settings; design and delivery of system performance measures; knowledge of monitoring and evaluation processes; and knowledge of the regulatory framework and the machinery of government.

Membership will consist of no less than four members and no more than eight members.

Members must be able to dedicate sufficient time to make a meaningful contribution to the progress of the advisory group from late November to March 2012.

Selection criteria and process

Nominations or applications for membership of the advisory group will be considered under these criteria:

- relevant experience
- knowledge of system performance and quality intervention measures
- understanding of quality in the ECE environment
- appropriate level of cultural responsiveness and understanding of the importance of identity, language and culture in ECE
- knowledge of the ECE sector in NZ and the environment within which it operates, including the Government's responsibilities under *Tiriti o Waitangi*
- ability to provide objective system-wide advice beyond their own involvement, experience or representation
- being available and able to commit to the whole process.

Role and scope

In scope:

The advisory group will provide advice on workable solutions covering:

- the development of clear and measurable ratings of quality performance
- ways to measure compliance with regulatory standards and criteria
- identification of poorly performing services
- monitoring of poorly performing services, and effective ways to lift their performance, including a graduated response
- measures of quality and ways to intervene that ensure quality is improved
- the timing of support and advice, and timeframes for any steps that might follow support and advice
- the effectiveness of current interventions and any suggestions for altering interventions to lift quality
- effective sanctions for poorly-performing services
- process for closure if performance does not improve
- any structural changes required to effect improvements in identification, monitoring and improvements in poorly performing services
- the provision of better information to parents.

The advisory group should have due regard to:

- any compliance burden likely to be created for services or government
- the costs and benefits of any proposals
- alignment with other ECE priorities
- the recommendations of the ECE Taskforce
- the risks and benefits of closing poorly performing services, compared to other options.

Out of scope:

- Kohānga Reo

Meetings and process

The Ministry of Education will convene and chair meetings of the advisory group.

Responsibility of members

Members:

- must act in the best interests of all stakeholders, including children and parents
- must endeavour to provide objective advice

Views of members will not be taken as those of their employers, or their organisations.

Conflict of interest

Advisory group members should perform their tasks honestly, impartially and in good faith. Members should also avoid situations that might compromise their integrity or otherwise lead to conflicts of interest.

If a member becomes aware of a conflict of interest, they will advise the Ministry of Education.

Payment and employment status

A daily fee of \$250 will be paid in accordance with Cabinet Office Fees Guidelines [CO (09) 5 refers].

Members will be reimbursed for actual and reasonable travel and accommodation costs.

Reporting

The advisory group will report to the Group Manager ECE in the Ministry of Education.

Term

The advisory group will meet for up to six days starting in late October and ending in early March 2012.

Confidentiality

Advice provided by the advisory group to officials will be treated in confidence. Members will not disclose information provided to them in confidence by officials.

Members will not make media statements about the work of the advisory group.

Official Information Act 1982

The Official Information Act 1982 will apply without exception to the activities of the advisory group. The Ministry will be responsible for ensuring that members are aware of the provisions of the Act, and the extent to which written material is discoverable under it.

Reference

*Quality in Early Childhood Services (August 2010)

Appendix B: Terms of Reference - Advisory group: quality early childhood education for children under two

Quality

ERO has found that it is the interweaving of many aspects of practice that contribute to good learning opportunities for infants, toddlers and young children. In high quality services it is the interrelationship between the following features, rather than any one on its own, that underpins the quality of education and care provided:

- leadership
- philosophy
- vision
- relationships and interactions
- teaching and learning
- assessment and planning
- professional learning, qualifications and support
- self review
- management.*

Remit

There is widespread acceptance that good outcomes for children depend on high quality early childhood experiences and that poor quality early childhood education (ECE) can harm children.

The evidence is clear: quality matters for the education and care of children under two. ECE for under two year olds is the fastest growing part of sector. Growth is particularly strong in home-based services.

Young children are at a critical stage in their brain development and need to form appropriate attachments to caring adults. Two recent reports emphasise the need for quality ECE and the potential for long-term damage if quality is lacking.¹

The quality for children under two advisory group is being convened to consider practical ways to improve the quality of ECE service provision for children aged under two years.

The literature suggests structural quality improvements, for example better ratios and more qualified staff, are the way to improve the quality of ECE for under two year olds. The advisory group will consider trade offs and costs as it prioritises suggestions for improving the quality of ECE for children under two. It will contribute to the development of detailed policy proposals that consider the impact on children, families and whānau, the sector, and government. It is likely that improvements in quality for under two year olds will cost more money. The advisory group will also consider how improvements could be funded.

Membership

The membership of the advisory group will contain a mix of relevant experience and expertise. This should include organisational and operational sector experience, demonstrated understanding of the components of quality in ECE settings, design and delivery of system performance measures, knowledge of monitoring and evaluation

¹ Dalli, C., White, E.J., Rockel, J., Duhn, I., with Buchanan, E., Davidson, S., Ganly, S., Kus, L., & Wang, B (2011). *Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like? A literature review*, Ministry of Education, Wellington, New Zealand.
Carroll-Lind J. and Angus, J. (2011) *Through their lens: An inquiry into non parental education and care of infants and toddlers*, Office of the Children's Commissioner, Wellington, New Zealand.

processes; and knowledge of the regulatory framework and the machinery of government.

Membership will consist of no less than four members and no more than eight members.

Members must be able to dedicate sufficient time to make a meaningful contribution to the progress of the advisory group from late November to March 2012.

Selection criteria and process

Nominations or applications for membership of the advisory group will be considered under these criteria:

- relevant experience
- knowledge of system performance and quality intervention measures
- understanding of quality in the ECE environment
- appropriate level of cultural responsiveness and understanding of the importance of identity, language and culture in ECE
- knowledge of the ECE sector in NZ and the environment within which it operates, including the Government's responsibilities under *Tiriti o Waitangi*
- ability to provide objective system-wide advice beyond their own involvement, experience or representation
- being available and able to commit to the whole process.

Role and scope

In scope:

The advisory group will provide advice on workable solutions covering:

- measures of quality and ways to intervene that ensure quality for children under two is improved
- structural and process quality improvements, and a balance between these and costs
- a pedagogy more closely attuned to the needs of very young children
- the timing of support and advice, and timeframes for any steps that might follow support and advice
- the provision of better information to parents.

The advisory group should have due regard to:

- the impact of early childhood experiences on children under two
- contemporary theories of development and learning of children under two
- any compliance burden likely to be created for services or government
- the costs and benefits of any proposals
- alignment with other ECE priorities
- the recommendations of the ECE Taskforce.

Out of scope:

- Kohānga Reo

Meetings and process

The Ministry of Education will convene and chair meetings of the advisory group.

Responsibility of members

Members:

- must act in the best interests of all stakeholders, including children and parents
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Reporting

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Term

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Confidentiality

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