

Provision of ECE services and parental perceptions

Results of the 2007 NZCER national survey of ECE services

Linda Mitchell



NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
TE RŪNANGA O AOTEAROA MŌ TE RANGAHAU I TE MĀTAURANGA

WELLINGTON

2008

New Zealand Council for Educational Research
P O Box 3237
Wellington
New Zealand

© NZCER, 2008

ISBN 978-1-877293-64-1

Distributed by NZCER Distribution Services
P O Box 3237
Wellington
New Zealand

Downloaded from <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/pdfs/16543.pdf>

Acknowledgements

This is the third report from New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER)'s second national survey of Early Childhood Education (ECE) services. Many people have contributed to the national survey. I very much appreciated the willingness of teachers/educators, managers, parents, and parent committee members to take the time to complete the survey and contribute their views. I would also like to thank the people within ECE services who distributed the questionnaires and encouraged people to fill them in.

Representatives of national ECE organisations, Ministry of Education staff, and individuals with expertise in ECE helped us identify issues that were important to canvass and commented on drafts of the questionnaires. This was valuable and helped us make sure that the survey addressed topical and important issues.

Ben Gardiner co-ordinated the development of the survey, assisted with proofing and designing the questions, co-ordinated mailouts, and answered questions from participants. Edith Hodgen and Simon Leong undertook the initial data analysis. Sally Robertson and Magdalene Lin contributed to coding and data capture. Cathy Wylie provided critical feedback throughout, and Bev Webber managed the publication process.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Executive summary	ix
Key findings	ix
<i>Operation and enrolment patterns</i>	x
<i>ECE attendance patterns and parent views</i>	x
<i>Funding</i>	xi
<i>Staffing</i>	xiii
<i>Roles, responsibilities, and training of committee members</i>	xv
1. Introduction	1
2. Research methodology	5
Sample	5
Response profiles	7
Analysis of data	11
3. ECE services' opening hours and enrolment patterns	13
Opening hours and service operation	14
ECE managers' perspectives on roll patterns at their service	15
<i>Individual children</i>	15
<i>Patterns of roll stability</i>	15
<i>Service capacity</i>	16
<i>Regularity of attendance</i>	17
Overall comments	18
4. ECE attendance patterns and parent views	21
Attendance patterns	21
<i>Length of enrolment in ECE</i>	21
<i>Usual attendance hours</i>	21
Desire for more hours of ECE	22
Desire for hours of ECE provision at different times	22
Different type of ECE service wanted	23
Choice patterns	23
<i>What do parents look for in a good ECE service?</i>	24

<i>Satisfaction with current service</i>	25
Attending more than one ECE service	25
Parent activities while child attends ECE	27
Parents' employment and study arrangements	28
Overall comments	29
5. Funding	31
Funding	31
<i>Funding sources</i>	31
<i>Views of funding and service financial health</i>	32
Affordability	32
Free ECE	35
<i>Consultation over Free ECE</i>	36
<i>Free ECE and optional charges and voluntary donations</i>	36
<i>Free ECE and hours offered</i>	37
<i>Free ECE and parental use of time</i>	37
Overall comments	41
6. Staffing, teacher workload and morale	43
Staff:child ratios	43
<i>Meeting regulated ratios</i>	44
Staff stability and recruitment	45
<i>Staff turnover</i>	45
<i>Managers' views of their ability to find and retain staff</i>	47
<i>ECE teachers' views of their career</i>	48
Employment conditions	49
<i>Rates of pay</i>	50
<i>Leave entitlements</i>	52
<i>Employer-subsidised benefits</i>	54
<i>Paid noncontact hours and staff meeting time</i>	55
Teacher morale, workload, and involvement in decisionmaking	57
<i>National picture</i>	57
Overall comments	60
7. Management support	63
Need for further support, training, and advice	65
ECE teacher interest in holding positions of responsibility	65
Overall comments	65
8. Roles, responsibilities, and training of committee members	67
Reasons for serving on the committee	67
Role of committee members	68

Hours spent on committee work and levels of responsibility	69
Support and training for committee work	70
<i>Consultation</i>	71
Major issues for committee members	72
Overall comments	72
9. Conclusion	73
The continuing challenges	73
<i>Meeting a diversity of parent needs</i>	74
<i>Recruiting and retaining qualified staff</i>	75
References	77

Tables

Table 1	Licensed ECE services sampled and response rates	6
Table 2	Response rates for participant groups in services with at least one response	7
Table 3	Percentage of participants from each service type	8
Table 4	Teachers'/educators' average years of working experience in ECE in 2007 (<i>n</i> = 401)	9
Table 5	Positions held by managers responding to the 2007 survey (<i>n</i> = 223)	9
Table 6	Managers' average years of working experience in ECE in 2007 (<i>n</i> = 223)	10
Table 7	Employment status of parents and committee members	10
Table 8	Household income of parents and committee members	11
Table 9	Highest school qualification of parents and committee members	11
Table 10	Managers' view of children's continuation at their ECE service up to school	15
Table 11	Reasons for irregular attendance	18
Table 12	Hours per week ECE attendance	22
Table 13	Parents' sources of information on quality of ECE services they could use	24
Table 14	Percentage of children attending more than one ECE service in five studies—slight increase over time	26
Table 15	Parents' activities while their child is at an ECE centre	28
Table 16	Parental fees per week paid for ECE service (N = 418)	33
Table 17	Affordability of ECE services for parents in four studies	33
Table 18	Affordability of ECE by whether family accesses Free ECE and a Childcare Subsidy	34
Table 19	ECE service affordability by family income groups (N = 418)	34
Table 20	Uptake of Free ECE at October 2007	35
Table 21	Weekly family savings made through accessing Free ECE	38

Table 22	Adult:child ratios	44
Table 23	Turnover rates in ECE services over past year	46
Table 24	Percentage of staff leaving the ECE service in the previous 12 months*	46
Table 25	Teachers/educators moving to current ECE service from another ECE service	47
Table 26	Teachers'/educators' thoughts about their work in five years time	49
Table 27	Average gross hourly wages and annual salary* for co-ordinating supervisors, supervisors/head teachers, assistant supervisors, and teachers/educators combined (excluding nonrespondents)	51
Table 28	Average gross annualised salary* for different positions in education and care services and kindergartens	51
Table 29	Average gross hourly wages for different positions in education and care services and kindergartens	52
Table 30	Average gross hourly wages for different positions in private and community-based education and care centres	52
Table 31	Average gross annual salary for different positions in private and community-based education and care centres	52
Table 32	Annual leave entitlement by private and community-based education and care types	53
Table 33	Annual sick leave entitlement by private and community-based education and care types	54
Table 35	Frequency of staff meetings by private and community-based education and care types	57
Table 36	Teachers'/educators' participation in decision making	59
Table 37	Teachers'/educators' participation in decision making by private and community-based education and care service types	60
Table 38	Outside organisational support for ECE service management	64
Table 39	Gains for committee members from their committee service	68
Table 40	Key elements of committee role	69
Table 41	Main things committee members would like to change about their role	70
Table 42	Characteristics of survey responses: Services from which one response received	79
Table 43	Characteristics of survey responses: Managers/head teachers	80
Table 44	Characteristics of survey responses: Parent committee	81
Table 45	Characteristics of survey responses: Parents	82
Table 46	Characteristics of survey responses: Teachers/educators	83

Figures

Figure 1	Parent views of what they look for in a good ECE service	25
Figure 2	ECE teachers' views of their job and workload	58

Appendix

Appendix A:	Characteristics of survey responses	79
-------------	-------------------------------------	----

Executive summary

This is one of three reports of the main findings from the 2007 NZCER national survey of ECE services. It focuses on provision of ECE services and parental perceptions. A second report (Mitchell, 2008b) examines assessment practices and aspects of curriculum. A brief overview of all the key findings is also available (Mitchell, 2008a).

In 2002, the Government published its long-term strategic plan for ECE (Ministry of Education, 2002). *Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki* focused on improving quality, increasing participation in ECE, and promoting collaborative relationships. In relation to the goal of increasing participation, government policy initiatives in ECE have included supplying land on school sites for ECE services, Promoting Participation Projects in low-income communities, Ministry of Education (MOE) network planning and analysis, support for organisations to design and build ECE services, development of a new funding system, and funding up to 20 hours Free ECE in teacher-led services for three- and four-year-olds.

The NZCER national survey was of teachers/educators, managers, parents, and committee members in 601 licensed ECE services, undertaken in late 2007. The sample selected was representative of all licensed ECE service types, but in the actual responses there was some over- and under-representation. This report documents participants' perceptions of provision of ECE services, and provides a picture of changes that have occurred since the first NZCER national ECE services survey was carried out in late 2003.

Key findings

In late 2007, we found the sector largely in good heart, particularly in relation to teacher morale, and the introduction of Free ECE. Where there has been policy work that has changed resources for ECE services, parents, and teachers, we see some positive gains.

The main challenges for services and policy makers continue to be found in:

- meeting a diversity of parent needs at the local level, sometimes resulting in oversupply in some areas, and under-supply in others
- recruiting and retaining qualified staff, raising some questions about employment conditions and variations between ECE services as well as issues of teacher supply.

Operation and enrolment patterns

Some changes in ECE service operation had occurred since 2003. According to managers surveyed:

- There has been a small increase in the proportion of home-based networks and kindergartens open for longer hours.
- Thirty-nine percent of ECE services had changed their opening hours and operation in the last two years. The main changes were: to increase opening hours or session length (32 percent); open on more days per week (24 percent); change from sessional to all day (14 percent); offer sessional and all day ECE (14 percent); or open on fewer days per week (11 percent).
- The main reasons for making changes were to address the needs of parents and community (67 percent of those who made changes), and as a response to providing Free ECE (38 percent).
- Thirty-two percent of the services had seen their rolls increase in the past two years, particularly in education and care and home-based services.
- However, 12 percent of ECE services had seen their roll decline; including 26 percent of the kindergartens responding. Half the services with roll declines had seen these occur as new ECE services started in their area.
- While there has been some increase in rolls and times when services are open, there is still some unmet need:
 - Most ECE services catering for under-twos do not have unused child places. A quarter of those serving children under two would like more places. A third of ECE services catering for children over two have unused child places, and 19 percent would like to offer more places.
 - A quarter of parents whose child currently uses an ECE service would like to use more hours of ECE: barriers remain ECE opening hours or availability, and cost.
- More children from playcentre and home-based services went on to other ECE services before they started school, and this was similar to patterns found in the NZCER 2003 national survey.

ECE attendance patterns and parent views

Sixty percent of parents were using 20 hours or less ECE per week and 13 percent were using 40 hours or more.

More families were in paid work while their child attended ECE in 2007 (47 percent) compared with 2003 (36 percent), and fewer were involved in helping at the ECE service in 2007 (30 percent) compared with 2003 (43 percent). Twenty percent of parents in paid employment used an ECE service for fewer hours than they were in work or study for. Their main other arrangements were for partners or other family members to care for the child.

Twenty-five percent of parents said their child attended more than one ECE service. The rate of dual attendance (two or more ECE services at the same time) appears to be growing. Parents appeared to see the dual attendance arrangements as offering a balance that benefited both their child's learning and wellbeing and themselves.

Most parents thought they had enough information on types and quality of ECE services when they made their choice. Most relied on word of mouth; just under half had actually visited services.

Eleven percent of parents would like to use a different type of service but could not, especially an education and care service. The main reason was no spare places were available. These are slightly lower figures than those of the NZCER 2003 national survey (14 percent of parents) and the New Zealand Childcare Survey (Department of Labour and National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, 1999) (15 percent of parents).

ECE experience starts early for many children. A third of the children of the parents who responded to the survey had started ECE before they were one year old, and a further 29 percent when they were two years old.

Funding

A new government funding system, with differential funding rates responsive to the cost drivers faced by each type of ECE service was implemented on 1 April 2005, and funding rates substantially increased in 2006. The Childcare Subsidy rate was increased and income eligibility threshold expanded over time from 2004. Free ECE for three- and four-year-olds for up to 20 hours per week in teacher-led services started from 1 July 2007.

Most education and care (85 percent) and home-based management (91 percent) understood the basis for government funding. Only about half the playcentre parent management, kindergarten head teachers, and kōhanga reo management said they understood it, but also may have not had direct responsibility for managing it. Less than half of committee members understood it, although they rated financial decision making as a key part of their role.

Services were in a better financial position in 2007 than 2003 according to information from managers. Forty-one percent reported a surplus (36 percent in 2003), 26 percent said they broke even (35 percent in 2003), and 16 percent of services were in deficit in the last financial year (21 percent in 2003). Most managers (46 percent) thought their financial position was better than three years ago (most because of increased income, but some because they had cut costs) or about the same (23 percent). However, 50 percent of managers said government funding was not enough to meet their ECE service needs.

Free ECE

Uptake of Free ECE by services responding to this survey was close to national figures on uptake in October 2007—99 percent of kindergartens (one nonresponse), 100 percent of home-based services, and 69 percent of education and care services. Four of the six kōhanga reo in the survey were also taking part, which was higher than the national figures for the time.

Of these, all-day services were more likely to offer the maximum of 20 Free hours a week. All the home-based services and 89 percent of education and care services were offering 20 Free hours

per week for both age groups. Thirty-one percent of kindergartens and one kōhanga reo were offering 20 hours for three-year-olds, and 46 percent of kindergartens and half the kōhanga reo were offering 20 hours for four-year-olds.

Most parents (72 percent) in all services, including playcentre, were consulted over Free ECE. Of services eligible for Free ECE, home-based parents and kindergarten parents were most likely not to be consulted or to be “unsure” about whether they were consulted. Thirty-one percent of kindergarten committee members said they were not consulted.

Thirty-four percent of services offering Free ECE asked parents to pay optional charges for the Free hours, and 10 percent asked for voluntary donations. Fifty percent charged less than \$5 per week, and a further 24 percent charged between \$5 and \$20 per week. The highest charge was \$102.50 per week. Optional charges were mainly for resources (52 percent of those charging), additional staffing (50 percent), regular excursions (46 percent), and food (38 percent).

Half the managers reported changes to ECE service participation because of Free ECE. The most common changes were more child enrolments, children attending for longer hours, and more regular attendance. Children shifting to or from an ECE service, and fewer child enrolments were less commonly reported.

Overall, parents were highly positive about the effects of Free ECE. Most parents accessing Free ECE made family savings. Weekly savings were highest for education and care parents (57 percent saved over \$40 per week). In response to an open question about the effect of Free ECE on the family, 56 percent of all comments were about the positive impact on family finances, 17 percent were about greater accessibility to ECE and improved learning opportunities for their child, and 9 percent were about the positive impact on families’ lives, e.g. enabling more choice about how the primary caregivers spend their time. Some families said Free ECE made a difference to whether or not their child attended ECE. The few negative comments were about a range of issues over the implementation of Free ECE and the perceived loss of playcentre children to services offering Free ECE.

Sixteen percent of parents accessing Free ECE increased the hours their child attended, and one percent decreased the hours.

Parents said they had more time for family responsibilities (19 percent), more time for their own interests (12 percent) and more time for unpaid work for the family (12 percent) because of accessing Free ECE. Six percent of parents increased their hours of paid employment, one percent started paid work, and 5 percent enrolled in study.

Views expressed by playcentre management that parents are leaving playcentre because of Free ECE were not upheld by the parent data. Very few parents reported changing from one service to a different service (four parents), from two services to only one (two parents), or from one service to two (five parents) to access Free ECE. None were originally playcentre parents. However, it was early days in the implementation of Free ECE.

Affordability

Fees payable ranged from nothing to \$250 per week. From parents' perspectives, ECE services were more "easily affordable" in 2007 (43 percent of parents chose this option) than in 2003 (24 percent of parents), although a similar percentage of parents had difficulty in meeting costs in both years (21 percent in 2007, 24 percent in 2003). This change in affordability is likely to be related to changes in government funding for ECE, as well as increases in parental employment over this period that would provide more money for families.

Both Free ECE and receipt of the Childcare Subsidy enhanced levels of affordability:

- 53 percent of parents receiving both Free ECE and the Childcare Subsidy rated ECE as easily affordable
- 47 percent of parents whose child received Free ECE only found ECE as easily affordable
- 40 percent of parents whose service was in receipt of a Childcare Subsidy for their child rated ECE as easily affordable
- 30 percent of families not accessing Free ECE or the Childcare Subsidy rated ECE as easily affordable.

Parents with family incomes of \$30,000–\$40,000 were most likely to categorise their ECE service as "affordable but difficulties", or "barely affordable" (37 percent). Nevertheless, about 20 percent of parents from every other income group (high and low) had difficulties in meeting costs. This finding reinforces the difficulties of designing a targeted funding system that caters effectively for the disposable incomes of all families.

Staffing

Adult:child ratios

Most ECE services, except kindergartens and kōhanga reo, had better ratios than those that were regulated. Eighty percent of kindergartens and 67 percent of kōhanga reo managers said their ECE service met regulatory requirements only, possibly because these services have lower parent fees and had less money to put to improving ratios.

However, 27 percent of managers in all ECE service types sometimes struggled to meet the adult:child regulated ratios, largely because of the limited availability of relievers. Going ahead, only 61 percent of services were confident that they could meet regulated ratios over the next two years.

Sixty-three percent of ECE service managers thought their current staff:child ratio was good. Kindergarten managers, who have the highest staff:child ratio, were most likely to think their ratio was inadequate (60 percent).

Staff stability and recruitment

Staff stability is important for young children, since children's wellbeing is supported by secure relationships with adults who know them well.

Teacher turnover in ECE services was still high:

- Of services employing paid staff, 66 percent had one or more teacher leave in the last 12 months (62 percent in 2003).
- The average turnover rate per service (the proportion of staff leaving in a year) was 23 percent.

Teachers report that their main reason for moving to their current ECE service was to improve employment conditions; they also moved for personal reasons, and to improve their pay. Seventy-six percent of teachers/educators regarded their work as a long-term career, but only 54 percent imagined themselves in an ECE teaching position in five years time. There was a high level of uncertainty (19 percent of teachers/educators were "not sure" what they would be doing).

All teacher-led ECE services were required at the end of 2007 (a few months after this survey) to have at least 50 percent of their teachers with a qualification recognised by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC), i.e. allowing them to be a registered teacher. All but one of the kindergarten managers who employed staff said all their staff met this requirement. Only 15 percent of the education and care services were at the 100 percent registration level, but 88 percent were at or above the 50 percent level.

Sixty-three percent of managers had difficulty finding suitable and qualified teachers to fill their vacancies, with higher proportions among education and care centres and home-based networks. Almost half of these said they had *no* applications from qualified teachers.

Just over half those employing staff said they had difficulty recruiting and retaining registered staff. Most of those who had this difficulty were from education and care services (85 percent). To address their difficulties, education and care service managers were training staff (79 percent), offering higher salaries than others in the locality (32 percent), offering recruitment incentives (30 percent), or using government initiatives (24 percent).

A quarter of the managers said they had experienced problems over the past 12 months in fulfilling the requirements of the staff hour count for their government funding. Almost all of these were from education and care services. Private services were more likely to have had difficulty than community-owned (52 percent cf. 30 percent).

Teacher/educator employment

Kindergarten teachers were paid the most of all teacher groups, whether their pay was expressed as an hourly wage or annual salary, followed by teachers/educators in education and care centres. Kōhanga reo kaiako had the lowest pay rates (but small numbers). We found staff employed in community education and care centres had some more favourable employment conditions than those employed in private education and care centres.

Leave provisions varied by service type. Kindergarten teachers had better annual and sick leave than teachers/educators in other ECE service types. Teachers/educators in community-based education and care services had better annual and sick leave provisions than teachers/educators in privately owned education and care services. Annual leave entitlements were higher in 2007 than 2003, probably because of the change in the statutory annual leave entitlement from three weeks to four weeks on 1 July 2007.

Fewer teachers/educators reported having no *paid noncontact time* in 2007 (13 percent) compared with 2003 (21 percent), particularly in education and care centres (7 percent in 2007, 25 percent in 2003). Kindergarten teachers had the most paid noncontact hours per week, but they also reported working more hours unpaid.

Frequency of staff meetings did not change from 2003 to 2007. Thirty-six percent of teachers/educators said staff meetings were held only every four months or less frequently. Staff meetings were held more frequently in kindergartens in both 2003 and 2007. Staff meetings were also more frequent in community-based education and care centres than in private education and care centres.

Teacher morale and workload

Teacher morale levels had improved somewhat: 81 percent of teachers/educators said their morale was “good” or “very good” (73 percent in 2003). This improvement in morale levels may be related to the improvements in resources, professional development, and funding for ECE over this period.

Ninety-three percent of teachers/educators “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they enjoyed their work. About two-thirds were positive about their opportunities for learning, their treatment, and the support they received to do their work effectively. Most teachers/educators rated themselves as part of the decision-making team on processes directly related to the curriculum.

However, only 59 percent of teachers/educators thought their workload was fair or manageable, 57 percent that their work and personal life was balanced, and 46 percent that they had enough time to prepare for their work with children.

Most teachers/educators put in extra hours outside paid work time, mainly up to six hours per week. Eighteen percent were putting in 7–10 additional hours per week, and 10 percent were working longer than this. Kindergarten teachers reported higher hours of unpaid work time. They were also more likely to disagree that their work and life was balanced and their workload was fair.

Roles, responsibilities, and training of committee members

ECE service committees have the capacity to offer a forum for parents and others to make a contribution to their ECE community and have input into shaping the service’s future directions.

Committee members served on their ECE service committee predominantly because they wanted to help children and contribute to community. Most also gained satisfaction, increased understanding of the ECE programme, friendship, and social support through their committee experience. Consistent with their aspirations, a higher percentage of playcentre parents than other parent committee members said that they gained increased understanding of children, increased skills in working with others, and confidence in abilities and skills. A higher percentage of these parents also gained a sense of belonging, and friendship and social support.

Financial decision making and organising fundraising and working bees were ranked as key elements of the committee role by over half the respondents. Education and care, playcentre, and kōhanga reo respondents rated governance roles of strategic planning, policy development, and ECE service review as important. Fewer kindergarten committee members rated these governance roles as important, and more kindergarten committee members rated organising fundraising and working bees as important. These findings raise questions about what might be the most productive role for parent committees, both for the ECE service and committee members themselves.

On average committee members spent 2.7 hours per week on committee work. Hours spent were higher in kōhanga reo and playcentre. These respondents were also more likely to rate the overall level of responsibility as “too much”.

Two areas where committee members would like more support were identified:

- Thirty-seven percent of committee members would like more information or training. A third of committee members said they did not receive training for their role. Respondents were generally positive about the formal support that they did receive.
- Committee members identified some issues about uncertainty around consultation, i.e. how to consult, whether the committee needed to consult, and time pressures that inhibited consultation. Most committee members had consulted with parents in the previous 12 months. Only 19 percent had consulted with a local Māori community. Kōhanga reo had had extensive consultation with local iwi, marae, hapū, community leaders, and Māori parents.

1. Introduction

In 2003, NZCER carried out the first comprehensive survey in a nationally representative sample of licensed ECE services. NZCER intends to carry out these surveys every three years, to provide a barometer of the wellbeing of ECE provision and to monitor changes to provision of interest to the sector and policy analysts. This 2007 survey is the second in the series, and builds on the 2003 survey.¹

This report documents ECE service participants' experiences and perceptions of provision of New Zealand's ECE services, the changes that have occurred since 2003, and participants' responses to the Government's funding and staffing initiatives. The views of managers, teachers/educators, parents, and parents committee members from education and care centres, kindergartens, playcentres, and home-based services, and from a small sample of kōhanga reo are reported.

In this report, we examine aspects that have been the focus of government policy initiatives where we might expect any changes to have become consolidated, and where the 2003 survey showed there were some challenges:

1. Data on the ECE services' operation and enrolment patterns, roll stability, and the needs of families (current users) are examined. Enrolment patterns and roll stability have been found to be associated with service type (e.g., playcentre children tend to leave before they go to school), and socioeconomic status of families using the service (children from low-income homes tend to have less regular attendance and greater transience than children from higher income groups).
2. Information from parents gives an overview of family experiences, including children's attendance hours, the incidence of children attending more than one ECE service, parent satisfaction with the times, hours, and choice of service available to them, affordability of the ECE service, and parent activities while the child attends an ECE service. The 2003 national survey (Mitchell & Brooking, 2007) and other parental surveys carried out in 1998 (Department of Labour and National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, 1999) and 2006 (Mitchell & Hodgen, forthcoming) found that up to a third of families wanted to access more hours of ECE than they were currently able to access. Reasons why they could not access these hours were mainly because the ECE service did not offer more hours, or

¹ Two further NZCER publications report on other findings from the 2007 survey. Both are available at www.nzcer.org.nz. Mitchell, L. (2008a). *Early Childhood Education Services in 2007: Key findings from the NZCER national survey*, provides a snapshot of changes in ECE from 2003, and main issues and challenges confronting ECE services in 2007. Survey findings from a subset of questions about assessment and aspects of curriculum are discussed in Mitchell, L. (2008b). *Assessment Practices and Aspects of Curriculum in Early Childhood Education. Results of the 2007 NZCER national survey of ECE services*.

additional hours were unaffordable. These surveys have also found around 20 percent of children attend more than one ECE service. This survey examined whether these patterns were still evident and the reasons for any patterns found.

3. A new funding system, with differential funding rates responsive to the cost drivers faced by each type of ECE service, was implemented from 1 April 2005, and funding rates substantially increased in 2006. The Childcare Subsidy rate was increased and income eligibility threshold expanded over time from 2004. Free ECE for three- and four-year-olds for up to 20 hours per week in teacher-led services was made effective from 1 July 2007. In this 2007 national survey, NZCER asked participants about their views of the new funding system and its adequacy, parental fees, and the operation of Free ECE and its effects on services and families.
4. One of the emphases within the ECE strategic plan has been on raising the qualification levels of staff in teacher-led ECE services. Targets for increasing the percentage of registered teachers have been set² and a range of initiatives offered to support ECE services and staff to reach the targets.³ Pay parity between kindergarten teachers and teachers in the school sector was phased in from 1 July 2002. However, pay parity has not been secured for qualified teachers in other ECE services types. The 2003 NZCER national ECE survey reported variable employment conditions, a high teacher turnover, and difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff that participants attributed to a competitive environment. In 2007, data were gathered on the following staffing issues: adult:child ratios; staff turnover; rates of pay and employment conditions; and teacher morale, workload, and involvement in decision making.
5. Finally, in this 2007 survey we gathered data on management and treasurer expertise, and on the roles, responsibilities, and training of parent committees. These have not been the target of government actions through the ECE strategic plan, but some sector representatives indicated that the roles of parent committees may be changing, and the Ministry of Education (MOE) was interested in management and treasurer expertise. In addition, the 2003 NZCER national survey found that high levels of volunteer work were creating burdens for playcentre management.

Chapter 2 describes the research methodology for the study.

In Chapters 3 to 8 the findings for 2007 are presented, and responses compared with those given in 2003, where there is comparable data.

² By 1 January 2004 (shortly after the 2003 NZCER national survey was sent out), all “persons responsible” were required to be registered teachers; 31 December 2006—50 percent of regulated staffing to be registered teachers; 2010—80 percent of regulated staffing to be registered teachers or services can count teachers studying for an NZTC approved qualification as up to 10 percent of the 80 percent requirement; 2012—all regulated staff to be registered teachers or at least 70 percent of regulated staff to be registered teachers and the remainder to be studying for an NZTC approved qualification.

³ Range of initiatives: TeachNZ Scholarships; higher funding rates for services with more registered teachers; Loan Support; National and International Relocation Grants; Returning to Teaching allowances; Relief Teacher Pool; Ministry of Education & New Zealand Teachers Council. (2007). *Towards Full Registration: A support kit*. Recruitment Brokers; Incentive Grants; and Primary Study Grants.

Chapter 9 provides an overview of the findings, and discusses developments to date and key issues that have emerged.

2. Research methodology

This was the second NZCER national survey of licensed ECE services. We built on questions and findings from the first national survey, carried out in 2003, and consulted with sector representatives and MOE officials about important issues to include. MOE officials asked us to include some specific questions about children with special educational needs.

Sample

The questionnaires were sent in October 2007 to 601 licensed ECE services,⁴ approximately 15.9 percent of all services, using lists obtained from the MOE. The sample was a random sample stratified by ECE type and educational region (North; North Central; South Central; South Island).

Overall, there was at least one response from 53 percent of the services sampled. Response rates were highest in kindergarten and lowest in home-based and kōhanga reo. We have made comment on kōhanga reo where they stand out from other services rather than reporting percentages, because of their small numbers. The main reason given for low response rates in home-based services was that some managers did not think the survey questions were entirely suitable for home-based services, and declined to take part. It would have been useful for NZCER to have had further contacts with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust to encourage greater participation from kōhanga reo.

⁴ Excludes licence exempt playgroups.

Table 1 Licensed ECE services sampled and response rates

Service type	Number of services in NZ (N)	Number of services in sample (n)	Percentage in sample	Percentage of services with at least one response
Education and care—private	1155	182	30	27
Education and care—community	802	130	22	24
All Education and care	1957	312	52	51
Kindergarten	620	98	16	22
Playcentre	473	74	12	18
Home-based	240	39	7	4
Kōhanga reo	491	78	13	5
Total	3781	601	100	100

Within the education and care sample, 130 were community-based and 182 were privately owned. Fourteen of the home-based services were community-based and 25 were privately owned.

Appendix A sets out the characteristics of ECE services nationwide, the characteristics of the 2007 NZCER survey sample of 601 ECE services, and the ECE service characteristics of participants. Overall, there is some under-representation in the responses of home-based, kōhanga reo, privately owned ECE services, and some over-representation of kindergarten, playcentre, and isolated services. Privately owned services did not have a committee, so this lowered percentage returns for education and care and home-based services in relation to the committee member survey, where over half are privately owned. We had somewhat lower responses from managers of services receiving Equity Funding (34 percent cf. 27 percent nationwide). There was considerable over-representation of kindergarten management (head teacher) responses, over-representation of management from larger size services (31 or more children), and under-representation of playcentre management responses compared with national patterns. Because of these differences with the national picture, we have been careful to check any differences related to ECS service type, and to report those that exist.

Each ECE service in the sample was sent a flyer outlining “Hot topics” covered in the 2007 national survey for its service type and an information sheet, along with one questionnaire for management, two questionnaires for teachers/educators, and two questionnaires for parents/caregivers. Community-based ECE services were also sent two questionnaires for committee members/office holders (the president/chairperson and a committee member who

might perhaps convey a different view from the chairperson's on some issues). We asked for the management questionnaire to be filled in by a person who was knowledgeable about their ECE service operation; e.g., the head teacher, supervisor, president, or an administrator. We asked management to select teachers/educators and parents/caregivers at random and explained how this was to be done. We provided the name of the project administrator to contact for any queries. A freepost envelope was sent for return of each questionnaire.

We emailed and faxed those who had not returned their questionnaires by the due date of 19 November 2007 to advise them we had extended the due date to 17 December, and tell them it was not too late to hand out surveys and complete them. We sent a thank you note to all respondents as they returned their survey, advising them that an overview report (Mitchell, 2008a) would be available in 2008.

Response profiles

Table 2 gives the response rate for each of the four groups surveyed. The table gives the percentage of services from which at least one response was received as well as the percentage of the individuals sampled from whom a response was received (these percentages are the same for the managers where one questionnaire was sent to each service). The responses for the parent committee members are calculated excluding the private education and care services and the home-based services. However, not all of the other services had parent committees, so the response rate is a low estimate of the response.

Table 2 Response rates for participant groups in services with at least one response

Participants	Number sampled	Number of surveys returned	Percentage of centres sampled with at least one response	Percentage of sample responding
Managers	601	223	37	37
Parents	1202	418	45	35
Teachers/educators	1202	401	43	33
Parent committee members	760	232	40	31

Consistent with our sampling and numbers for each type of ECE service provision, the highest proportion of respondents was from education and care centres. Kindergartens had the highest response rate among managers.

Table 3 Percentage of participants from each service type

Participants	Education and care	Kindergarten	Playcentre	Home-based	Kōhanga reo
Managers (<i>n</i> = 223)	41	42	7	3	7
Parents (<i>n</i> = 418)	50	22	18	4	6
Teachers/educators (<i>n</i> = 401)	52	26	16	4	2
Parent committees (<i>n</i> = 232)	33	32	32		3

This report draws on data from teachers/educators and parents: their profiles are described below.

The *teachers/educators* responding to our survey were predominantly women (97 percent). Most identified themselves as Pākehā/European (77 percent). Eleven percent identified as Māori; 3 percent Indian, 2.5 percent Chinese, 1 percent SE Asian, 1.2 percent other Asian (7.7 percent of Asian ethnicities); and 2 percent Samoan, 1.2 percent Tongan, 1 percent Cook Islands Māori, 0.5 percent Niuean, 0.2 percent Fijian, 0.2 percent Tokelauan, 0.5 percent other Pasifika (5.6 percent of Pasifika ethnicities).

Most teachers/educators held qualifications related to their service type.

- In teacher-led services (education and care, kindergarten and home-based), 58 percent of teachers held a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) and 30 percent held a BEd (Tchg) (ECE).
- The most common qualifications for playcentre educators were Playcentre Courses 1, 2, 3, or 4 (53 percent), or Playcentre Parts 1, 2, or 3 (36 percent). Eleven percent of playcentre educators held a Diploma of Teaching (ECE), and 10 percent held a BEd (Tchg) (ECE).
- Two of seven kōhanga reo kaiako held Whakapakiri, two held Te Ara Tuatahi, and one held Te Ara Hiko. Two also held a Bachelors degree in a non-ECE field.
- Two percent of all teachers/educators held a postgraduate qualification. Sixteen percent were studying for an ECE-related qualification. A third of teachers/educators held more than one qualification.

Most teachers/educators responding were experienced in teaching in ECE. Twenty-two percent had 16 years or more teaching experience in any ECE service, 39 percent had six to 15 years' experience, 28 percent had two to five years' experience, and 9 percent had less than two years' experience. Average years teaching in any ECE service were five years (playcentre and kōhanga reo respondents), eight years (education and care respondents), and nine years (kindergarten and home-based respondents).

Table 4 Teachers/educators' average years of working experience in ECE in 2007
(n = 401)

ECE service	Education and care (n = 208) (average years)	Kindergarten (n = 110) (average years)	Playcentre (n = 62) (average years)	Home-based (n = 14) (average years)	Kōhanga reo (n = 7) (average years)
Current ECE service	4.9	6	4	6.4	4.7
Any ECE service	7.6	8.7	5	9.4	4.7

The *managers* responding to our survey filled various positions in the ECE service. Most held teaching positions (head teacher, supervisor, or educator/trainer). Education and care services and kōhanga reo were more likely than others to have their survey completed by an administrator, and education and care and home-based by a manager. Playcentre surveys were mostly completed by the chairperson or president.

Table 5 Positions held by managers responding to the 2007 survey (n = 223)

ECE service	Education and care (n = 120)	Kindergarten (n = 50)	Playcentre (n = 36)	Home-based (n = 11)	Kōhanga reo (n = 6)	Total (n = 223)
Head teacher	27	92	3	0	0	35
Administrator	44	6	17	9	67	30
Supervisor	40	2	17	36	17	27
Licensee	41	2	0	9	0	23
Director/manager	44	2	3	55	0	27
CEO	9	6	3	0	0	7
Chairperson/ president	3	0	67	9	0	13
Owner	8	0	0	0	0	4
Educator/trainer	1	0	11	0	0	2

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because multiple responses were possible.

Managers were mainly women (97 percent), predominantly Pākehā. The ethnicity of managers was Pākehā, 86 percent; Māori, 8 percent; of Pasifika ethnicities, 3 percent; of Asian ethnicities, 4 percent; and other ethnicities, 2 percent.

Like the teachers/educators, most managers held qualifications related to their service type.

Other than playcentres, on average they had more years working in any ECE service, and in their current ECE service, than did teachers/educators.

Table 6 **Managers' average years of working experience in ECE in 2007 (n = 223)**

ECE service	Education and care (n = 120) (average years)	Kindergarten (n = 50) (average years)	Playcentre (n = 36) (average years)	Home-based (n = 11) (average years)	Kōhanga reo (n = 6) (average years)
Current ECE service	8.2	10	3.5	7	8.5
Any ECE service	14	17.4	4	16.5	11.7

The *parents* and *committee members* responding to our survey were also mainly women (95 percent and 93 percent).

The ethnicities of parents and parent committee members were:

- European/Pākehā (parents, 70 percent; parent committee, 82 percent)
- Māori (parents, 20 percent; parent committee, 12 percent)
- Pacific (parents, 5 percent; parent committee, 3 percent)
- Asian (parents, 3 percent; parent committee, 1 percent)
- Other (parents, 2 percent; parent committee 8 percent).

Parents were more ethnically diverse than were parent committee members, teachers/educators, or managers. They appeared to be slightly more likely to be in paid employment, though the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 7 **Employment status of parents and committee members**

Employment status	Parents (n = 418) %	Committee members (n = 232) %
Full-time parent/caregiver	43	50
Part-time paid employment	37	34
Full-time paid employment	18	14
No response	1	2

Family income and qualification levels were reasonably similar for committee members and parents responding to the survey, and these were also consistent with national census data.

Table 8 Household income of parents and committee members

Household income of parents, committee members, and families with children under 5 household income	Parents (<i>n</i> = 455) %	Committee members (<i>n</i> = 171) %	Census 2006 data for families with children ^a %
Under \$30,000	10	8	7.9
\$30,000–\$69,999	39	42	37.7
\$70,000–\$109,000	25	33	54.4
\$110,000 plus	17	12	
No response	10	5	

^a Includes families with adult children. Families with young children are likely to have lower incomes than these national values.

NB: Percentages add to more than 100 because of rounding.

Table 9 Highest school qualification of parents and committee members

Qualification	Parents (<i>n</i> = 418) %	Committee members (<i>n</i> = 232) %
No qualification	7	4
Fifth Form qualification	10	10
Sixth Form Certificate	16	15
Higher school qualification	9	6
Certificate, apprenticeship, or diploma	25	28
Bachelor degree	19	22
Postgraduate degree or diploma	13	14
Other	1	1

Analysis of data

The questionnaires used in this survey took between 30 minutes and 50 minutes to complete. It was a challenge to cater for the diverse range of ECE services within a common questionnaire, and some questions were less applicable to home-based services. In future, we may consider surveys that focus on issues for specific service types. Copies of the questionnaires are available from NZCER.

Many of the questions asked were in the form of closed questions with boxes to tick. Answers to open-ended questions and comments were categorised and coded. Frequencies of the answers are reported, and these have been cross-tabulated with a set of service characteristics—type, whether

or not the ECE service receives Equity Funding,⁵ and ownership (private or community-based)—to find out if these characteristics are reflected in any differences in answers.

Personal characteristics of parents—of income, qualification levels, and paid employment status—have been used in analysing some parent and parent committee data.

Cross-tabulations were done using SAS, and chi-square tests were used to test for association. Differences significant at the $p < 0.01$ level are reported. At the $p < 0.01$ level, a 1-in-100 chance exists that a difference or relationship as large as that observed could have arisen by chance alone. Differences that are meaningful or following a trend are reported as indicative differences where the p value is between 1 and 5 percent. A significant association does not imply a causal relationship.

⁵ Equity Funding is a small amount of funding that is additional to bulk funding and discretionary grants, and is intended to reduce educational disparities. It has four components: low socioeconomic; special needs and non-English speaking background; language and culture other than English; and isolation. It is intended to increase participation by providing additional resources, and improve quality through addressing the higher cost for achieving the same educational outcome.

3. ECE services' opening hours and enrolment patterns

ECE services in New Zealand are characterised by their diversity on a range of dimensions: service type;⁶ hours of operation; whether the service is teacher-led or parent/whānau-led,⁷ whether paid staff are employed or staffing is provided by volunteers; philosophy; and whether the service is community-managed or privately owned.⁸ Diversity can offer opportunity for children to attend services that meet families' cultural and other aspirations, but only if diverse provision is available in all localities. Provision of ECE services is not regarded by the New Zealand Government as a full state responsibility, and the Government has not played the role of direct provider, as it has in the schools sector.

The 1990s in New Zealand education has been called “the decade of marketisation” (Nash & Harker, 2005, p. 201). A market approach to education is based on assumptions that parents and children are consumers of education, and markets encourage consumer needs to be met. Under this paradigm, it is assumed that parents will not use a service that is not meeting their needs, is too costly, or is of low quality. The market approach assumes that the community or business sector will respond to community needs and the operation of the market will ensure appropriate provision, and competitive pay and working conditions for staff. A market approach to provision and staffing has been especially evident in New Zealand's ECE services (Mitchell, 2005).

As part of the strategic plan for ECE, the MOE has undertaken some mapping and analysis of existing services, provided discretionary grant funding and advice and support for some new ECE services to become established, and funded initiatives aimed at promoting ECE participation in localities with low participation. Eighteen pilot ECE centre-based parent support and development

⁶ The main service types are kindergartens, education and care centres, home-based services, kōhanga reo (providing total immersion in Māori language and in tikanga Māori–Māori culture, and requiring whānau management), Pasifika bicultural and immersion services, playcentres (parent-run co-operatives where parents are trained to work with the children), The Correspondence School (distance service), and playgroups. Playgroups include Māori immersion, and community language playgroups for different ethnic communities, as well as general playgroups.

⁷ Parent/whānau-led services are playgroups, playcentres, and kōhanga reo, which are run by parents and managed by the whole parent/whānau body.

⁸ Privately owned services are found only in the education and care and home-based sectors. In 2007, 57 percent of these services were privately owned. Ownership and distribution of assets and financial gains distinguish between these service types. The MOE defined community-based services as follows: “Community-based services are those established as Incorporated Societies, Charitable, Statutory or Community trusts, or those owned by a community organisation (e.g. City Council). Community-based services are prohibited from making financial gains that are distributed to their members” (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 3).

projects have been funded by the Ministry of Social Development (eight in 2006, 10 in 2007). But on the whole a market model continues to apply to the provision of ECE services.

Opening hours and service operation

Almost all the ECE services were open for at least 36 weeks a year, but most do not operate all year round. Playcentres were most likely to operate for 36–40 weeks a year (78 percent), kindergartens between 41–45 weeks (84 percent), kōhanga reo for 46–50 weeks a year (67 percent), and home-based services for 51–52 weeks (73 percent). Just under half the education and care services operated for 46–50 weeks a year, with another 26 percent open for 51–52 weeks a year.

Most managers said that most of the current parents using the service were happy with the number of weeks their service was open, but 21 percent said some parents had asked for the service to be open for longer (more so in education and care services and kōhanga reo). Six percent of managers said some parents wanted fewer weeks a year (more so at kindergartens).

The longest opening hours in 2007 were for home-based services (average 58 hours, which is a long working day, and week, for a home-based educator), and education and care services (average 39 hours), followed by kōhanga reo (average 28 hours), kindergartens (average 24 hours), and playcentres (average 10 hours).

Compared to the 2003 NZCER national survey data, more home-based services were open for 60 hours or more. While more kindergartens were opening for 20 hours or less (18 percent in 2007, 12 percent in 2003), more were also opening for 26 hours or more (40 percent in 2007, 35 percent in 2003).

Most managers (73 percent) thought that most of the parents of the children who currently attended their ECE service liked the current hours. This is an increase from the 61 percent who thought so in 2003. At a third of the services, some parents were asking for longer hours (more so in kindergartens and education and care services), not significantly different from the 27 percent who wanted longer hours in 2007. Six percent of managers said some parents were asking for shorter hours, much as in 2003. ECE service managers were more positive about the hours they were open in terms of meeting parents' needs as a whole, but a significant minority were aware of some of their parents having needs they were not meeting. This may point to the difficulty of meeting all parents' needs equally within a particular service, or to the desirability of having a range of services accessible in a given area.

Thirty-nine percent of managers reported changes had been made to ECE service operation in the last two years. Of those reporting changes, the most common change was to increase the length of sessions/hours (32 percent), open on more days per week (24 percent), offer some flexible places (18 percent), change from sessional to all day provision (17 percent), offer sessional and all day ECE (14 percent), or open on fewer days per week (11 percent). Playcentres were more likely to

change than other services (66 percent), either by opening for more days, or conversely, for fewer days per week.

The main reasons for changing operation according to the managers whose service had made some change, was to address the needs of parents and community (67 percent), and in response to providing Free ECE (38 percent). Other reasons given by around a quarter of those whose service had changed were in response to enrolment increases, enrolment decreases, or funding system incentives (other than Free ECE).

ECE managers' perspectives on roll patterns at their service

Individual children

Most managers (72 percent) said that few children left their ECE service before they went to school. Playcentre and home-based managers were more likely than other ECE service managers to say that a quarter or more of their children left their service before they started school. These patterns were similar to those found in 2003.

Table 10 Managers' view of children's continuation at their ECE service up to school

Stability pattern	Education and care (<i>n</i> = 120) %	Kindergarten (<i>n</i> = 50) %	Playcentre (<i>n</i> = 36) %	Kōhanga reo (<i>n</i> = 6) %	Home-based (<i>n</i> = 11) %	Overall (<i>n</i> = 223) %
Few children leave before they go to school	77	82	53	100	18	72
About a quarter of children leave before they go to school	12	12	14		36	
Many children leave before they go to school	8	4	31		36	12

Patterns of roll stability

Somewhat more services, particularly education and care and home-based services, reported that their rolls had increased over the past two years. Thirty-two percent reported a roll increase (26 percent in 2003) in the last two years, with more education and care (43 percent in 2007, 39 percent in 2003) and home-based services (45 percent in 2007, 21 percent in 2003) reporting

increases. MOE national figures show education and care and home-based enrolments increased from 2003 to 2007, while enrolments decreased in other forms of provision.⁹

Twelve percent of the ECE service managers said their roll had declined steadily over the past two years. This was least likely to be the case for education and care services (3 percent). However, kindergartens responding were more likely than other ECE services to report that their roll numbers had decreased in the last two years (26 percent in 2007, 13 percent in 2003).

A fifth of the service managers said their roll numbers fluctuated each year: this was particularly the case for kindergarten, playcentre, and home-based service managers. However, kindergartens, along with education and care services and te kōhanga reo, also had a higher proportion of constant rolls.

These differences in service patterns of roll stability do show differences between service types, with kindergartens and playcentres facing more challenges as a whole than other services, and education and care services showing more ability to adapt to changes in their catchments and family needs. However, they also show differences *within* the service types, indicating that the nature of local catchment changes and family needs also plays a role.

Similar to reasons given in 2003, the two main reasons for roll change were general population or housing changes in the area (31 percent) and changes in parent/caregiver preference (23 percent). Eleven percent mentioned that other ECE services had opened in the area: this affected almost half of those whose rolls had declined. Ten percent mentioned the Free ECE policy: most of these were services whose rolls had increased.

More managers from kindergartens (24 percent) and home-based care services (27 percent) were also likely to give as a reason for enrolment change that other ECE service/s had opened in the area and children had moved to them.

Service capacity

To get some idea of whether ECE services could take more enrolments, we asked managers if they had any child places that were not being used. Fifty-two percent said they did have. Twenty-one percent had one or more places for children under two, and 37 percent had one or more places for children aged over two years. Playcentres were most likely to have unused spaces for children under two (47 percent). Home-based networks were least likely to have unused places.

⁹ A 16.2 percent increase in education and care enrolments and 15.5 percent increase in home-based enrolments compared with 10.5 percent decrease in kōhanga reo enrolments, 3.5 percent decrease in playcentre enrolments, and 3.1 percent decrease in kindergarten enrolments.

The main reasons why services had spare places were that other ECE services were thought to be more attractive to families (15 percent), a decision by management to keep some places available (13 percent), too many ECE services in the community (9 percent), difficulty attracting children in the age group where the service had spare places (7 percent), a declining population of preschool children in the community (7 percent), parents wanting different times than the service was able to offer (including wanting full-time ECE where the service was offering only part-time), and not being able to find the staff needed to meet regulated ratios (4 percent).

We also asked managers whether they would like their service to make changes to the number of its child places. Most thought their current number of places was adequate. However, a quarter of those serving children under two would like more places, as would 19 percent of those serving children over two. Most of these were education and care centres, but playcentres and home-based networks were also over-represented in services catering for under-tuos.

Regularity of attendance

Irregular attendance is an issue for children's learning and for service funding. Children benefit from attending good-quality ECE, and longer duration in good-quality ECE is linked with children's cognitive gains and gains for learning dispositions and social competence (Mitchell, Wylie, & Carr, 2008). In addition, attendance is linked to funding. Government funding is not provided for children who are absent from a service for more than 21 days (three-week rule for continuous absence), or for a consistent pattern of absence (frequent absence rule). Irregular attendance patterns can also create difficulties for ECE managers, e.g., in meeting the regulations for adult:child ratios (3 percent said this was a reason why they sometimes struggled to meet the regulated ratio, particularly in education and care services, playcentre, and kōhanga reo).

Nearly all managers said that most of their children attended regularly (83 percent). Fifteen percent said about a quarter of the children had irregular attendance and 2 percent said that about half the children had irregular attendance. Proportionately more of those managers reporting irregular attendance were from kindergarten (30 percent) and playcentres (28 percent). These patterns were also found in 2003.

The *Evaluation of Initial Uses and Impact of Equity Funding* (Mitchell, L., Royal Tangaere, A., Mara, D., & Wylie, C., 2006a) found that low family income and location in poor communities created problems that could affect regularity of attendance, i.e., health and nutrition, affordability, wet or cold weather, and proximity or transport availability. Like the 2003 national survey, this survey also found that children in education and care centres and kindergartens that were receiving the low socioeconomic component of Equity Funding were more likely to have irregular attendance than were children in services not receiving Equity Funding.

Managers in services with any children who did not attend regularly were asked to mark the reasons. There were four main reasons: poor child health (43 percent); bad weather (29 percent); parent needs (28 percent); and lack of transport (21 percent).

Isolated services were no more likely than others to report irregular attendance in this survey or in the 2003 NZCER national survey. This finding differs from findings in the evaluation of Equity Funding (Mitchell et al., 2006a), where most isolated participants said irregular attendance was an issue for many children. The Equity Funding evaluation had a smaller sample of isolated services (17 services, 10 of which were kōhanga reo, compared with 32 in this survey), and asked somewhat different questions about irregular attendance. However, both this survey and the Equity Funding evaluation identified the same reasons for irregular attendance in isolated localities. These reasons were more prevalent than for services that were not isolated. They were seasonal employment, transience of families, and cost (because of greater distances travelled to attend an ECE service).

Table 11 Reasons for irregular attendance

Reason	Overall proportion of managers rating reasons for irregular attendance (n = 223) %	Types differing markedly from overall proportion
Child's poor health prevents regular attendance	43	Kindergarten (70%)
Children sometimes do not attend when the weather is bad	29	Kindergarten (60%), playcentre (42%), education and care (14%), home-based (9%)
Casual attendance meets parents' needs	29	Home-based (46%), playcentre (44%)
Parent has other responsibilities and cannot always bring child	27	Playcentre (53%), kindergarten (50%), education and care (14%), home-based (9%)
Parents have no transport	21	Kindergarten (54%)
Children move between parents/caregiver	17	Kindergarten (36%)
Parents move out of/into the area	17	Kindergarten (36%)
Parents have seasonal work	11	Playcentre (22%)
Parents cannot always afford to bring their child	7	

Overall comments

Some ECE services are changing their operation, especially towards longer opening hours and session times. This is in part a response to community needs, according to managers, but also to Free ECE and other funding incentives, and sometimes in response to competition from other ECE services in the locality. Managers were aware that some of their existing parents would like

some (further) changes to opening hours. Education and care services and home-based services appeared to be finding it easier to steer their way through the changes in demand and policy than did kindergartens and playcentres. However, there were also differences within each of the ECE service types, raising questions about whether the changes being made to ECE provision through services' own initiatives and the kinds of services currently available in different communities alone will be able to best meet the needs of families.

There are some questions, too, about overall ECE service capacity to serve additional enrolments. Most of the ECE services catering for children under two had no spare places. Only about a third of those catering for older children had spare places. A quarter of services for children under two said they needed to add more places, as did 19 percent of those catering for children over two.

4. ECE attendance patterns and parent views

Attendance patterns

Length of enrolment in ECE

We asked parents to tell us about the ECE experience of their eldest child attending the ECE service in our sample, including when they first enrolled at an ECE service. For 22 percent, this was their only child. Fifty-one percent had two children in their family, and 27 percent had three or more.

Almost all these children of the responding parents had begun ECE before they were four-year-olds. A third attended ECE before they turned one year old, and 29 percent before they were two years old. A fifth had begun when they were two years old, and 15 percent at age three. Thus it appears that for many children, ECE is starting early. Children attending kindergarten were more likely to have started attending ECE at age three (40 percent), and those attending home-based networks to have started before they turned one (59 percent).

Usual attendance hours

Children's usual ECE attendance as reported by parents ranged from under five hours per week (4 percent) to 40 hours or more (13 percent). Sixty percent of parents were using up to 20 hours ECE per week for the child in the service we asked about.

- Hours of attendance were lowest in playcentre.
- Two-thirds of kindergarten children used between 15 and 20 hours a week. More parents reported using 20 or more hours a week (21 percent) than the 13 percent in 2003. Fourteen percent of kindergarten head teachers said their kindergarten had lengthened one or more session times, and 8 percent said the kindergarten had changed to an all-day service.
- Education and care centre children were divided almost equally between those using less than 20 hours or more. These patterns are likely to reflect whether children are using a full-time or part-time place.
- Home-based services showed the greatest range of attendance hours, perhaps a reflection that home-based services may be more flexible than other service types about hours to suit parental needs.
- Most kōhanga reo children used 30 hours or more per week. The Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust recommends that children attend for at least 30 hours to maximise language learning.

Table 12 Hours per week ECE attendance

Hours per week	Kindergarten (n = 85) %	Playcentre (n = 80) %	Education and care (n = 216) %	Home- based (n = 17) %	Kōhanga reo (n = 20) %	Overall (n = 418) %
Under 10 hours	16	83	14	29	10	28
10–14 hours	14	11	13	12	0	12
15–20 hours	65	6	19	26	10	26
21–29 hours	2	0	15	18	5	9
30–39 hours	1	0	18	6	50	12
40 hours or more	0	0	21	12	25	13

Desire for more hours of ECE

Interest in using more ECE remains at much the same proportion since 1999, despite the changes that have occurred in ECE service operation, particularly since 2003. A quarter of the responding parents, who were already using ECE, said they would like to use more hours of ECE. More hours of ECE were wanted by 27 percent of parents in the Department of Labour/National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women New Zealand Childcare Survey (1999), and by 31 percent of parents in the Locality-based Evaluation of Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki that gathered data from parents in 2006 (Mitchell & Hodgen, forthcoming). The 2003 NZCER national survey did not ask parents directly about additional hours they wanted.

Interest in using more hours per week was higher among current home-based network users, kindergarten, and early education and care service users.

Forty-six percent of parents wanting more hours wanted to use up to four hours per week only. Thirty-two percent wanted to use five to nine hours, and 22 percent wanted to use 10 or more hours per week.

The main reason why more hours were not being used was because the ECE service did not provide the hours wanted (42 percent of those who would like to use more hours, particularly kindergartens) or more hours were too expensive (33 percent), or the ECE service did not offer services at the time they wanted (18 percent).

Desire for hours of ECE provision at different times

Overall, most parents (93 percent) were satisfied with the times that ECE provision was available to them.

Six percent of parents (27 parents) said the times their child attended an ECE service did not suit them (but bear in mind that this study did not include parents whose children did not attend an ECE service). What was wanted in preference was quite varied, with eight parents wanting school hours (especially kindergarten), eight parents wanting term breaks (especially kindergarten and education and care services), and four parents wanting all day. A few parents wanted night time (three parents), every day of the week (two parents), flexible provision, e.g., school hours on three days a week and morning only on two days (two parents), morning only (one parent), and weekends (one parent). None wanted afternoons only. These figures are consistent with the 6 percent of parents who wanted hours at different times in NZCER's 2003 national survey and the 9 percent of parents participating in the Department of Labour/NACEW New Zealand Childcare Survey (1999) and in the Locality-based Evaluation of Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (Mitchell & Hodgen, forthcoming).

Different type of ECE service wanted

Eleven percent of parents said that they would *like* to use another ECE service if they could. Just over half of these would like to use an education and care service.

The most frequent reason given for not using the desired other service was that there were no spare places (50 percent of those wanting to use another service). Cost was the barrier for 26 percent of those who wanted to use another service. These were also the two main reasons given in the 2003 NZCER national survey.

A slightly higher percentage of parents (15 percent) wanted to use different types of service in the Department of Labour/ National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women New Zealand Childcare Survey (1999) and the 2003 NZCER national survey (14 percent).

Ten percent of the parents—whose children were currently attending ECE—were on the waiting list for another ECE service. This was most likely to occur among home-based network parents (26 percent).

Choice patterns

Around three-quarters of the parents thought they had had enough information on types of ECE services and quality of those services when they were making their choice of a service for their eldest child to attend.

Just under half said they used a visit to ECE services to gain information about the quality of the options available to them. Most relied on word of mouth.

Table 13 **Parents' sources of information on quality of ECE services they could use**

Source	Parents (<i>n</i> = 418) %
Word of mouth	86
Visit to ECE services	46
ERO reports	26
Internet	14
Health professional	11
ECE organisation	10
Community noticeboards	7
Local schools	7
Local media	7
Ministry of Education	4

Those who would have liked more information on the types of ECE services available to them would have appreciated information about where they were located (86 percent of those who wanted more information), the cost of different services (72 percent), the age groups in different services (72 percent), waiting lists (58 percent), opening times (51 percent), and parent involvement (48 percent).

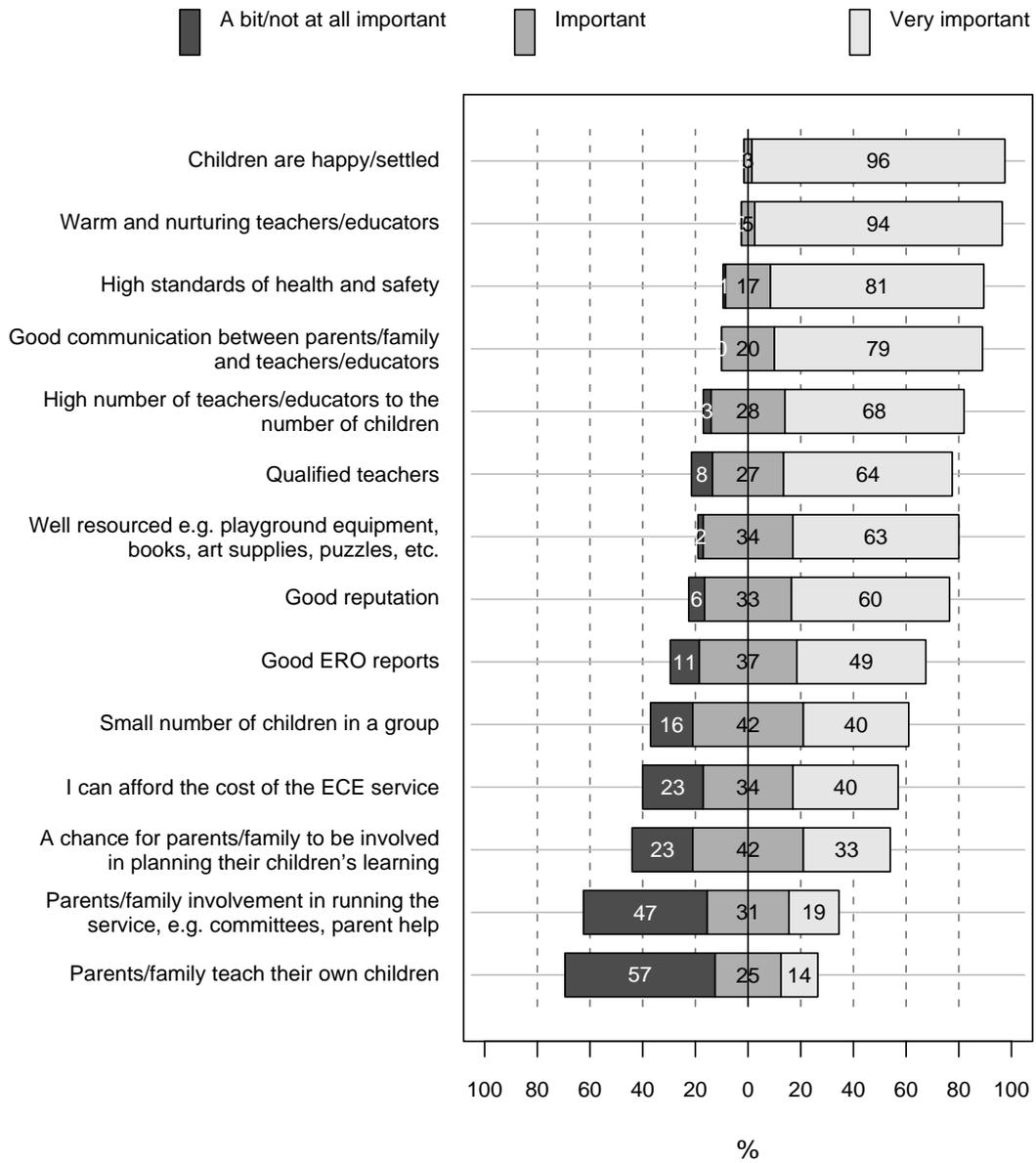
Those who would have liked more information on the quality of ECE services they could use would most like each ECE services to provide a pamphlet or prospectus about themselves (72 percent of those who would like more information), encouragement to visit the service (44 percent), and open days (43 percent).

There were no significant differences between ECE service type users in terms of their sense that they had enough information about different types of service and service quality.

What do parents look for in a good ECE service?

We gave parents a list of 14 items related to aspects of ECE services that might be important to parents, and asked them to rate their importance to them. Figure 1 below shows that most important to parents are children who are happy or settled, warm and nurturing teachers/educators, high standards of health and safety, and good communication between parents and teachers/educators. In the next bracket of importance come a high number of teachers/educators to children, qualified teachers, good resources, and a good reputation. Parents were least concerned, overall, with parent involvement in terms of teaching or running the service, but around four-fifths thought it was important that parents were involved in planning for their children's learning.

Figure 1 Parent views of what they look for in a good ECE service



Satisfaction with current service

Seventy-one percent of parents responding rated their satisfaction with their child's current ECE service as very good, and 22 percent, as good. Four percent said it was (just) satisfactory, and two parents thought their level of satisfaction was poor. There were no significant differences between parents using different service types.

Attending more than one ECE service

Twenty-five percent of parents said their child attended more than one ECE service.

An overall percentage of around 20 percent of children attending more than one ECE service was consistently found during 1998 to 2004 in the three studies where this was measured. A slightly higher percentage of parents used more than one service in the 2006 Locality-based Evaluation of Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki and in this 2007 survey. This finding raises the question of whether the higher percentages of children attending more than one ECE service that was found in 2006 and 2007 represents an increasing trend.

Table 14 Percentage of children attending more than one ECE service in five studies—slight increase over time

Service type	NZCER national survey*—parents (2007) (n = 418) %	Locality-based evaluation of Pathways to the Future* (2006) (n = 793) %	Locality-based evaluation of Pathways to the Future* (2004) (n = 870) %	NZCER national survey—parents (2003) (n = 455) %	Department of Labour/NACEW Childcare Survey** (1998) (n = 6474) %
Overall	25	24	20	22	20
Kindergarten	25	29	23	18	
Playcentre	38	35	35	31	
Education and care	18	33	33	17	
Home-based	65	31	33	43	
Kōhanga reo	15	11	4		

* This survey included kōhanga reo.

** This survey did not break down the figures by service type.

The main reason why parents were using more than one service was that they thought a combination of services was beneficial for their child (58 percent). Other reasons were to have ECE at the times the parent wanted (24 percent of those using more than one service), or the days wanted (17 percent). Nine percent were doing it to reduce costs.

In this study, kindergartens were most used as the second service by playcentre and home-based service parents.

The parents who stated there were “other” reasons for using more than one ECE service generally elaborated on the main reasons of child benefits and hours. For example:

Hours:

One I go to with my children, the other I need when I go to work. (Playcentre parent)

Reduce time spent in day care. (Education and care parent)

Parent involvement:

Playgroup is time for me to interact with her. (Education and care parent)

So as a parent, I can play with my child. (Kindergarten parent)

So I can play with my children and meet people. (Playcentre parent)

Social for child and I. Meeting people in area whom will attend school with. (Education and care parent)

Education programme:

Meet other friends and enjoy music. (Education and care parent)

Transition to school:

My child has formed wonderful relationships with children at this ECE service and it's prep[aration] for school soon. (Playcentre parent)

Kindergarten is associated with school, easy transition. (Playcentre parent)

Parents appeared to see the dual attendance arrangements as offering a balance that benefited both them and their child, as for example a child going to home-based care for the hours the parent was employed and then playcentre for the child to socialise with more children their age and for the parent to be engaged in the education programme.

The Competent Children, Competent Learners study found that the incidence of attending more than one service at the same time did not have an impact on children's competencies at age five, or later ages.

Parent activities while child attends ECE

Parents were asked what they usually did while their child was at their ECE service. Most indicated more than one activity. The most common activities were paid work (47 percent), housework/shopping (46 percent), and helping at/attending the ECE service (30 percent).

More families completing the survey were in paid work in 2007—47 percent, up 11 percent from the 2003 NZCER national survey percentages. Conversely, fewer helped at the ECE service in 2003—30 percent, down 13 percent from 2003 percentages.

Parents from education and care and home-based services were more highly represented in paid work, and parents from playcentre were least represented, but were the largest group helping/working voluntarily at their centre. Kindergarten parents were more likely than other parents to do household or personal activities, i.e., housework or shopping, pursue their own interests, look after other children, or visit friends and relatives when their child was at their ECE service. These patterns were similar to those found in 2003.

Table 15 **Parents' activities while their child is at an ECE centre**

Parent activities	Kindergarten	Playcentre	Education and care	Home-based	Kōhanga reo	Overall
	(n = 85) %	(n = 80) %	(n = 216) %	(n = 17) %	(n = 20) %	(n = 418) %
Undertake paid work	28	9	65	94	55	47
Housework/ shopping	80	28	40	35	35	46
Own interests (sport/time out)	40	16	21	29	5	23
Help at or attend ECE service	40	83	10		20	30
Look after other children	44	14	19		25	23
Visit friends or relatives	38	10	13	6	10	17
Take part in education/training	9	9	12		25	11

Similar to NZCER's 2003 national survey findings, parents who were using full-time ECE services (69 percent) were more likely to be undertaking paid work than parents using sessional services (19 percent), but there was no difference in service type usage for parents in education or training. Those using sessional services were more likely to help at the service (58 percent compared with 7 percent), to undertake voluntary work (18 percent compared with 10 percent), and more likely to undertake household (59 percent compared with 35 percent) or personal activities (32 percent compared with 18 percent) while their child was at the ECE service.

Parents' employment and study arrangements

Fifty-six percent of parents were participating in paid employment and 21 percent were undertaking training/study.

Robertson (2007) found that 35 percent of 331 families surveyed experienced a "care gap" between the number of hours mothers were working and the number of hours children were attending ECE. In this NZCER survey, 20 percent of families used an ECE service for fewer hours than they were in work or study for. The main other arrangements made were for partners or other family members to care for the child during this time. Parents also worked from home or in the evenings, and were supported by a friend or neighbour. Their main reasons for using arrangements other than ECE services were that they preferred to use their particular combination

(43 percent of those who worked or studied for longer than they used ECE services), or that ECE services did not offer the times they needed (25 percent).

Overall comments

In 2007, some trends in parental paid employment and children's participation were apparent:

- More parents were in paid employment and fewer were involved in helping at or attending the ECE service with their child. This trend could have implications for parent/whānau-led services, particularly playcentre, which depends on parents being available to participate in the education programme. On the whole, parents see good communication and involvement of them in planning for their child's learning as much more important than being involved in ECE management or helping/working in the ECE programme itself.
- The incidence of children attending more than one ECE service appears to be increasing. Most parents said they used more than one ECE service because they thought this was beneficial for their child, since they perceived that different services have different strengths, but other main reasons were to access times and days that parents wanted. Perhaps this could be a response to the need for childcare while parents are in paid employment.
- Some kindergarten children were attending kindergarten for longer in 2007 than they were in 2003, with 21 percent of parents reporting that their child was attending for 20 hours or more per week, up from 13 percent in 2003. In general, the operation of kindergartens may become more like the operation of education and care centres if kindergartens continue the trend of offering longer hours for individual children. This raises questions about what places in ECE will be available for all children in a locality if kindergartens reduce the places they have available by offering longer hours for a smaller group of children, and how the needs of parents who prefer a sessional kindergarten service will be met.
- Just over 60 percent of the children for whom we have information from the parents responding to this survey were starting ECE before they were two. There has been a rise in infant use of ECE, and other recent research has raised questions about the need to particularly ensure that quality ECE is provided for this group. There is some evidence that favourable social-emotional outcomes for infants and toddlers are conditional on ECE services being of good quality (Mitchell, Wylie, & Carr, 2008) and that good staff:child ratios are especially important (NICHD ECCRN, 2002). Having more adults to children may lead to more interactions with children at this early age when responsive interactions are particularly important for the child's wellbeing and stimulation.

The picture of ECE participation from the parents' perspective is consistent with service providers: still some unmet needs, particularly around time and cost.

Most parents thought they had enough information to make a choice of ECE, but this information was still mostly word of mouth.

The majority of current ECE users give a high rating to their level of satisfaction with their child's ECE service.

5. Funding

A new funding system, with differential funding rates responsive to the cost drivers faced by each type of ECE service, was implemented from 1 April 2005. The 2006 Government Budget adjusted the funding rates to cover increased operational costs, including inflation, and provided additional funding for playcentres to improve their financial sustainability and reduce administrative workload. Inflation adjustments have been made in subsequent years.

The Childcare Subsidy rate was increased and the income eligibility expanded over time from 2004.

Free ECE for three- and four-year-olds for up to 20 hours per week in teacher-led services was made effective from 1 July 2007.

Funding

A majority of participants (management, parents, parent committee members and teachers/educators) rated levels of government funding as a very important issue for their service.

Funding sources

All the services received government funding in the form of a subsidy based on child enrolments per hour, and actual attendance.

Three-quarters of the managers said they also received Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) childcare subsidies for some of their children, and the same proportion charged parent fees. Kōhanga reo, playcentre, and kindergarten managers were less likely to mention parent fees, but were more likely to mention parent donations as a source of funding for their service.

Fundraising was a source of income for 59 percent of the services responding, particularly for kindergarten, playcentre, and kōhanga reo, and least for home-based networks.

Forty-four percent of the services also gained money from charitable grants or donations, with most of this source being used by kindergartens and playcentres.

Twenty-eight percent of managers also mentioned Equity Funding, government per child enrolment funding to support services in low-income or rural areas, and those with high proportions of children with English as a second language. Equity Funding was most likely to be a source for kindergartens, kōhanga reo, and playcentres.

Views of funding and service financial health

Fifty percent of managers said their government funding was not enough to meet their service needs, with a further 14 percent unsure, but only 16 percent of services were in deficit in the last financial year (21 percent in 2003). Thirty-six percent said their financial position was better than it had been three years ago as they had increased their income; and 10 percent said it was better because they had cut costs. Twenty-three percent said their financial situation was much the same as three years ago. However, 18 percent said it was worse—either because their costs had risen, or because their income had decreased. Seventeen percent said they did not know how their service's current financial position compared with three years ago.

Most education and care (85 percent) and home-based management (91 percent) thought they understood the basis for government funding. Only about half the playcentre parent management, kindergarten head teachers, and kōhanga reo management said they understood it. Note that playcentre and kindergarten associations handle some or most of the financial responsibility for their own services and kōhanga reo numbers were low (N = 6). These findings suggest that most of those participants with responsibility for direct financial management understand the basis for government funding.

Most committee members in all service types regarded financial decision making as an important element of their role. Yet less than half the committee members understood the basis for MOE funding (education and care and kōhanga reo respondents were more likely to state they understood this).

Three-quarters of the ECE service managers thought that their accountant or treasurer had enough knowledge or expertise to effectively manage the service's finances. Nine percent were unsure, and 8 percent thought that their accountant or treasurer did not have this knowledge. There were no differences in views between the different ECE service types. Just over half the ECE service managers said their service employed a paid accountant to manage their finances: this was most likely to happen in the home-based networks and education and care services.

Affordability

The weekly fees being paid by parents ranged from nothing to \$250 per week. Weekly hours varied, with average hours for kindergarten and playcentre being lower than for education and care and home-based services.

Table 16 Parental fees per week paid for ECE service (N = 418)

Level of fees \$	Overall percentage of parents paying this fee %	Types differing markedly from overall proportion
Nothing	19	Kindergarten (57%)
Under \$5	14	Playcentre (53%)
\$5–9	9	
\$10–19	6	Home-based (none)
\$20–39	19	Kōhanga reo (50%), kindergarten (3%), playcentre (3%)
\$40–59	7	
\$60–99	12	Kōhanga reo (45%), kindergarten (1%), playcentre (1%)
\$100–149	9	Kindergarten (none), playcentre (none)
\$150–199	9	Education and care (18%), kindergarten (none), playcentre (none), kōhanga reo (none)
\$200 or more	3	Education and care (6%), other services (none)

A higher percentage of parents found ECE services to be “easily affordable” in 2007 than they were in the NZCER 2003 survey and in the Locality-based Evaluation of Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki (data gathered in 2004 and 2006), although similar proportions of parents had difficulties in meeting costs. However, the evaluation of Pathways to the Future was undertaken in localities where the median family income was below the average, and we had more families with low incomes responding in 2003—probably reflecting lower rates of parental employment then—so this change is likely to reflect changes in family income as well as changes in ECE funding policy.

Table 17 Affordability of ECE services for parents in four studies

Study	Easily affordable	Affordable	Affordable, but some difficulties	Barely affordable
	%	%	%	%
NZCER national survey 2007 (N = 418)	43	34	18	3
NZCER national survey 2003 (N = 455)	24	50	21	3
Locality-based evaluation of Pathways to the Future 2004 (N = 870)	31	41	21	3
Locality-based evaluation of Pathways to the Future 2006 (N = 793)	30	37	24	3

Kindergarten (65 percent) and playcentre parents (69 percent) were most likely to rate their ECE service as “easily affordable”, but they were also charged less in fees than other services.

Both Free ECE and receipt of the Childcare Subsidy were linked to affordability. More parents whose child received both Free ECE and the Childcare Subsidy (53 percent) found ECE to be “easily affordable”, followed by parents whose child received Free ECE only (47 percent), and parents whose service was in receipt of a Childcare Subsidy for their child (40 percent). Only 30 percent of families not accessing Free ECE or the Childcare Subsidy rated ECE as “easily affordable”.

Table 18 Affordability of ECE by whether family accesses Free ECE and a Childcare Subsidy

Affordability	Family accesses Childcare Subsidy and Free ECE (n = 141) %	Family accesses Free ECE only (n = 68) %	Family accesses Childcare Subsidy only (n = 70) %	Family does not access Free ECE or Childcare Subsidy (n = 109) %
Easily affordable	53	47	40	30
Affordable	31	28	31	43
Affordable, but difficulties	11	19	23	21
Barely affordable	3	2	3	5

The group of parents who were most likely to categorise their ECE service as “affordable but difficulties” or “barely affordable” had family incomes of \$30,000–\$49,000, but even some high-income families had difficulties. This indicates the difficulties of designing a targeted funding system that effectively caters for the disposable incomes of all families.

Table 19 ECE service affordability by family income groups (N = 418)

Affordability	<\$30K (n = 39) %	\$30–49K (n = 75) %	\$50–69K (n = 86) %	>\$70K (n = 176) %
Easily affordable	54	36	49	45
Affordable	26	24	29	36
Affordable, but difficulties	13	28	17	16
Barely affordable	3	9	1	2
	80	60	78	81
	16	37	18	18

Around a third of the services had some parents who were unable to pay the full fee or donation over the past year, and 37 percent of services had subsidised some children’s attendance whose parents could not pay.

Free ECE

Free ECE for up to 20 hours per week for three- and four-year-olds attending teacher-led services was effective from 1 July 2007, three months before this NZCER survey was distributed. Eligible services are licensed kindergartens, home-based networks, education and care centres, and some kōhanga reo (where kaiako meet qualification criteria). The Free ECE policy is intended to remove cost barriers.

This initiative came with widespread ECE sector support, having been promoted as a goal by sector representatives and individuals who participated in the working group to develop the ECE strategic plan. The working group's vision was for "an entitlement to a reasonable amount of free ECE for all children before they start school" (Working Group for the Development of the Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education, 2001).

New Zealand's adoption of a policy of free ECE is in keeping with trends in OECD countries to provide at least two years free provision before children start school. A free universal approach has long been adopted in some countries: in Italy from age three years, in Belgium (Flemish and French communities) from 30 months, and in the Netherlands from age four (OECD, 2001). More recently, other countries have come to regard free provision as a priority, including England where three- and four-year-olds are entitled to a part-time ECE place, comprising five 2½ hour sessions per week for 11 weeks each term. One issue being aired now is how to expand the entitlement to younger children and for longer hours. According to the Daycare Trust in England, while "parents have welcomed the initiative and the take-up of free places has been very high", the hours are insufficient for parents in paid employment (Daycare Trust, 2004).

Respondents were asked whether their service offered Free ECE for three- and four-year-olds. All the managers of home-based networks, all but one kindergarten head teacher (who did not respond), and 69 percent of education and care managers said their service was offering Free ECE for three- and four-year-olds. These are close to or slightly higher than figures on uptake of Free ECE provided by the MOE at the end of October 2007 when the survey was being completed. Four of the six Kōhanga Reo in the survey were offering Free ECE, which was higher than the national figure for Kōhanga Reo.

Table 20 Uptake of Free ECE at October 2007

Uptake rates	Kindergarten	Home-based	Education and care	Kōhanga reo
Uptake nationally (29 October 2007)	100	79	63	Info not provided
Sample uptake (managers' responses)	99	100	69	67

Six education and care managers (6 percent) and one kōhanga reo management participant said their service was intending to offer Free ECE in 2008.

Consultation over Free ECE

Most committee members in services eligible for Free ECE were consulted about decisions over Free ECE, except for kindergarten committee members (31 percent said they were not consulted). The main consultation was over whether or not to offer Free ECE, followed by the level of optional charges.

Seventy-two percent of parents were consulted about Free ECE, most frequently through being spoken to informally by management (32 percent), being invited to a meeting (21 percent), or being surveyed (19 percent). Of parents in services that are eligible for Free ECE, home-based parents (35 percent) were most likely to report not being consulted or being unsure, followed by kindergarten parents (28 percent), and education and care parents (22 percent). Kōhanga reo parents were most likely to be invited to a meeting (40 percent) and to report being consulted (85 percent). Like committee members, parents were consulted mostly about whether or not to offer Free ECE, and optional charges.

Playcentre parents were most likely to report not being consulted (45 percent), but playcentres are ineligible for Free ECE. Their “consultation” was most frequently about levels of playcentre donations, financial implications for playcentre, and discussion of the Free ECE policy:

It was lamented that playcentre was not eligible. Many parents have opted for kindergarten because of the Free hours and this is reflected in reduced availability of playcentre times.
(Playcentre parent)

Free ECE and optional charges and voluntary donations

Of services offering Free ECE:

- Thirty-four percent asked parents to pay regular optional charges for the Free ECE hours. This is similar to the 30 percent in Statistics New Zealand’s price survey in the September 2007 quarter.
- Fifty-two percent charged \$5 or less per week in optional charges, and 74 percent charged \$20 or less per week. The highest charge was \$102.50 per week.
- Optional charges were mainly for resources (52 percent of those charging), additional staffing (50 percent), regular excursions (46 percent), and food (38 percent).
- Ten percent asked parents for voluntary donations for the Free ECE hours. These services were all seeking \$5 or less per week, except for two services that asked for \$17 and \$27 per week.

Only 17 percent of parents accessing Free ECE reported paying optional charges. Ten percent reported paying voluntary donations. Ninety percent paid less than \$20 per week.

Free ECE and hours offered

Of services offering Free ECE for three- and four-year-olds, all home-based services and 89 percent of education and care centres were offering the maximum 20 hours per week for both age groups. Sessional services were less likely to offer the maximum hours: 31 percent of kindergartens and one kōhanga reo were offering 20 hours Free ECE for three-year-olds, and 46 percent of kindergartens and half the kōhanga reo were offering 20 hours Free ECE for four-year-olds.

Free ECE and proportion of three- and four-year-olds attending

In the short time since Free ECE had been in operation, there had been some impacts on the proportion of three- and four-year olds attending teacher-led services and parent and whānau-led services. Free ECE had been associated with changes in children's participation according to half the managers. The main patterns of changes were service-specific:

- more child enrolments, children attend for longer hours and children attend more regularly (education and care)
- more child enrolments, children attend for longer hours, and children shifted to this ECE service (home-based)
- children shifted from playcentre to an ECE service offering Free ECE (playcentre)
- no obvious common pattern—more child enrolments, fewer child enrolments, children shifted from this ECE service, children shifted to this ECE service were all reported by a minority (kindergarten)
- no changes (kōhanga reo).

Free ECE and hours of attendance

Free ECE has been accompanied by small changes in hours of participation in ECE and how parents use their time. Of those parents with a three- or four-year-old child who were accessing free ECE (N = 209), 16 percent increased the hours their child attended, and 1 percent (two parents) decreased the hours. Most of the new hours were between 15 and 29 hours per week.

Free ECE and parental use of time

Nineteen percent of parents of three- and four-year-olds accessing Free ECE said they had more time for family responsibilities, 12 percent had more time for their own interests and 12 percent had more time for unpaid work for the family because of accessing Free ECE. A small percentage of parents increased their hours of paid employment (6 percent), started paid work (1 percent), or enrolled in study (5 percent).

Free ECE and parental choice of service

Implementation of Free ECE had little effect on the type of service parents of three- and four-year-olds accessing Free ECE were using. A very few of these parents said they changed to a different service (four parents), or from two services to only one (two parents), or from one service to two (five parents). Four kindergarten children shifted to an education and care centre,

three education and care children shifted to another education and care centre, two education and care children shifted to a kindergarten, one playgroup child shifted to an education and care centre, and one parent did not respond. This contrasts with fears expressed by some committee members that parents will shift to other service types, and views of playcentre parent management that playcentre children are leaving playcentre for other services offering Free ECE. However, it is early days in the implementation of Free ECE.

Impact of Free ECE on families

Most parents accessing Free ECE said the family made savings because of Free ECE. (However, a fifth of these parents did not respond to the question about savings.) Thirty-four percent of these parents were saving more than \$40 per week. Education and care and home-based service parents reported the greatest savings. Three of these parents reported saving \$150–\$199 per week.

Table 21 **Weekly family savings made through accessing Free ECE**

Savings per week \$	Education and care (n = 105) %	Kindergarten (n = 78) %	Home-based (n = 10) %	Playcentre* (n = 6) %	Kōhanga reo (n = 10) %	Total (n = 209) %
None	10	6				8
Under 10	3	28			33	12
10–14	1	19	59	20	17	10
15–19	4	12				6
20–29	7	1	4	10		4
30–39	5	3		10		4
40–59	19	5	9	20	20	13
60–99	30	4		10		17
100–149	6				10	3
150–199	2			10		1
No response	15	22	20		50	21

* It is likely these parents were responding for another service they used since playcentre does not access Free ECE

In response to an open question, 56 percent of all responses were comments about the positive impact on family finances:

The 43 percent decrease in childcare payments has been a huge benefit in our household. Previously the weekly charge was a struggle to afford but the service was well worth the expense. Now that the same service is cheaper we have additional funds to make our budgeting easier. (Education and care centre parent)

Obviously less stress on weekly income. I had to keep my ECE hours for my first child whilst on maternity leave with second child so I wouldn't lose hours. [I was] struggling with

payments until Free ECE [was] available. I can also spend more time with second child whilst eldest is in ECE. (Home-based service parent)

The most [valuable] thing it did for us was it took the stress of making sure that money was there. Sometimes I had to make a choice of giving the money for kindy or giving for older child to go on trip at school. (Kindergarten parent)

\$100 per term makes a big difference and takes pressure off financially and our children can still attend a well-resourced community-based centre. (Kindergarten parent)

Several of these parents also commented they were using the money saved to support their child to undertake other enriching experiences, “extras” for the family, and for family savings or faster mortgage repayments:

The Free service is great. It means it is now more affordable to do other activities with our three-year-old such as gymnastics and swimming. (Kindergarten parent)

But we will be saving at least \$75 per week. This is a huge saving and we will now be able to afford to save some money. We also plan now to open up Kiwi Saver accounts for our whole family. (Education and care centre parent)

With the introduction of 20 Free hours—it enabled us to add the ‘saving’ to paying off outstanding loans—so a huge difference in the long term. (Education and care centre parent)

Positive effect . . . extra \$75 per week is used to pay the mortgage. (Education and care centre parent)

One of these parents commented that the Free ECE system was easier for the parent to manage than applying for and receiving the Childcare Subsidy:

Save \$60.30 per week and don’t have to fill out WINZ forms and travel to town to hand them into a WINZ office with I.D. and partner’s I.D. on a week day when I am working out of town during week days. Always under review with WINZ and when self-employed only having one set of accounts once a year when WINZ want six monthly reports. Also not knowing if you will get WINZ subsidy and then if not may have to pay back money to WINZ (uncertainty). (Education and care centre parent)

Parents also commented on greater accessibility to ECE and improved learning opportunities (17 percent). Without Free ECE, some parents said they would not have been able to pay for ECE or their child would have had to attend for fewer hours:

Allowed [child] to attend more sessions and increase her social learning time. Gets her more ready for transition to school next year. (Education and care centre parent)

It has ensured my son stays at childcare where he loves to play with his friends and do cool stuff (stuff I probably wouldn’t do at home). Otherwise it would be a financial decision whether he stayed (as I will be on parental leave in the near future). (Education and care centre parent)

It has made it affordable for us. Our child gets more socialising and learning time with his friends instead of being bored at home while mum or dad is doing house work. (Education and care centre parent)

It has meant I can enrol my three-year-old into ECE. If there were no Free hours I would still have her at home as we could not afford to pay for any preschool education. (Education and care centre parent)

It will allow us to keep our daughter in ECE care for at least a few days per week once number two arrives. This will be great for our daughter as well as mum! (Education and care centre parent)

Has had a very positive effect on us. We are totally happy with our ECE service provider. Financially, we were going to have to reduce the number of hours our child attended (as we have just had a second child) but the Free hours has allowed us to maintain the number of hours she attends. Thank you—we support the Free hours!! (Education and care centre parent)

Free ECE had had other positive impacts on families' lives (9 percent), enabling families to have more choice about how the primary caregiver spends their time:

It has enabled me, as an older mother, to choose to be a 'stay at home' mother. A huge benefit for us all as a family. (Education and care centre parent)

Free ECE has made a huge difference. Being on one income, having Free ECE where we pay voluntary donations has helped tremendously and has allowed my daughter to have important time at kindy and a childcare and therefore allowed me to spend valuable time with my eight-month-old son. (Kindergarten parent)

Has given me the opportunity to work twice a week as a relief teacher (primary school) and I can go to the gym twice a week. (Kindergarten parent)

It means, I don't feel guilty putting my son into his centre for a six-hour day, to give me a complete break from all the responsibilities that go with being a parent of a three-year-old. Can actually concentrate on other aspects of running my household, shopping, volunteer work, doing something for myself. (Education and care centre parent)

There were some acclamations:

I love love the 20 Free hours. I have got \$100 more a week. That's got to be good. (Education and care centre parent)

Fantastic. I have eight children and while I still would have paid to have my boy go to kindergarten I am extremely appreciative. One less cost in our life. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! (Kindergarten parent)

The few negative comments from those accessing Free ECE were about costs being higher for children outside the Free hours, the need to extend Free ECE to age six years, "the disorganised way" Free ECE was implemented, and "compulsory donations" being sought by a kindergarten association. Other comments included disappointment that a particular centre was not offering Free ECE, and the loss of playcentre children to services offering Free ECE and subsequent reduction in playcentre sessions:

As a playcentre family, we lost several children to the 'Free' option, which meant I had to choose new ECE for my child since the three–five-year-old sessions closed. I like

kindergartens but I miss the parent education and playing with my child. Twice a term we go to playcentre as an unfunded family just so we can play together and utilise the resources. If there wasn't Free ECE, I'd still be at playcentre. (Playcentre parent)

Overall comments

ECE services are somewhat better off financially than they were in 2003, and more parents find ECE services to be affordable. This seems to be related to both changes in ECE funding policy, and increased parental employment. The groups finding ECE somewhat less affordable are families in the income bracket \$30,000—\$49,000 per year, and families who are not accessing either Free ECE or a Childcare Subsidy. This finding highlights the difficulties of accurately targeting families to provide equitably for all families in a funding system that does not apply universally.

This is the first national survey gathering data from parents on how they are experiencing Free ECE. Overall, parents who are accessing Free ECE have responded very favourably. Most families are making savings because of Free ECE, some very considerable savings. There are indications that Free ECE has enabled some children to attend ECE who would otherwise have missed out, and families are using money saved for children's enriching activities and other family purposes. Parents value having greater choice as to how they spend their time.

Free ECE has also been accompanied by varying changes in participation, predominantly more regular participation and children attending for longer hours, but there are also some reductions in enrolments where services have changed their operation. Some playcentres' management report reductions in enrolments from children leaving playcentre for a Free ECE service, although these shifts were not captured in data from parents. These findings raise questions about how to ensure Free ECE provision is available for all children.

6. Staffing, teacher workload and morale

A robust body of research, reviewed by Mitchell, Wylie, and Carr (2008) shows that good-quality ECE programmes support children's learning and wellbeing, and that good quality is related to structural features of staffing that include staff:child ratios, staff qualifications, staffing stability, rates of pay, and professional development. In this section, we look at some of these aspects of staffing. We start with managers' views of their staff:child ratios,¹⁰ and then look at staff stability, employment conditions, including noncontact time for staff to plan and work together, and conclude this section by looking at ECE staff morale and workload.

Staff:child ratios

Roll numbers, age of children, and whether the service is all-day or sessional are used to determine regulated age groups and ratios. Currently, there are two age bands: under two-year-olds and over two-year-olds. Ratios for under two-year-olds are 1:5. Ratios for over two-year-olds are 1:6, 2:20, 3:30, etc. in all-day centres, and 1:8, 2:30, 3:45, 4:50 in sessional centres. The ratios in playcentre (1:5 for over 2½-year-olds and a nominated caregiver or parent for children under 2½ years) are better than those regulated for teacher-led services. Home-based services have a maximum ratio of 1:4, with up to 60 children per co-ordinator (registered teacher) in a network.

Some additional staffing through provision of an Education Support Worker may be available for children with special needs who meet criteria.

The maximum number of children who can attend an ECE service at any one time is 25 children under two and 50 children over two. In playcentre, only 30 children are able to attend at any one time.

A new framework will be implemented over 2009 and 2010, with different age bands: under 2½-year-olds and over 2½-year-olds. From July 2009, ratios for under 2½-year-olds will be 1:5, and ratios for over 2½-year-olds will be 1:10 in all-day centres. From July 2010, ratios for over 2½-year-olds will be 1:14 in sessional centres. This had only recently been announced and participants may not have known these details when they responded to the survey. Decisions have still to be made about group size.

These new ratios still fall short of recommendations for childcare standards for ratios in the US arising from the longitudinal NICHD study following more than 1000 children (NICHD Early

¹⁰ The MOE collects national data on ECE service staff:child ratios and staff qualifications in licensed services through the RS61 annual staffing return.

Child Care Research Network, 2002, 2006), which found a relationship between staff:child ratios (alongside qualified teachers and small group size) and child outcomes. These recommended ratios and group size are:

Ratios: 1:3 at six and 15 months; 1:4 at 24 months; 1:7 at 36 months.

Group size: 6 at six and 15 months; 8 at 24 months; 14 at 36 months.

High adult:child ratios (i.e., more adults to children) are important in enabling adults to be responsive to children, and scaffold and stimulate learning. High adult:child ratios have been found in several US studies (Burchinal et al., 2000; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1999) to be especially important for language stimulation of babies and toddlers.

Meeting regulated ratios

Most services responding to the survey, other than kindergartens and kōhanga reo, had better ratios than those that were regulated. Eighty percent of kindergartens and 67 percent of kōhanga reo managers said their ECE service met regulatory requirements only. One possible reason is that kindergartens and kōhanga reo had lower parent fees and catered for more middle/low or low-income families than other service types, and may have had less funding at their discretion to put into augmenting staff:child ratios.

Table 22 **Adult:child ratios**

Ratios	Kindergarten (n = 50) %	Playcentre (n = 36) %	Education and care (n = 120) %	Home- based (n = 11) %	Kōhanga reo (n = 6) %	Overall (n = 223) %
Meet regulated requirements only	80	6	8	27	67	26
Better than regulated requirements	14	94	90	64	17	70

However, 27 percent of managers said they sometimes struggled to meet the regulations for adult:child ratios, and this proportion was similar across all service types other than home-based services and playcentre. Most of those who said they sometimes struggled to meet the regulated ratio for their service said it was because of the limited availability of relievers (83 percent), and half to the short notice of absences of teachers/educators. The isolation of the ECE service or unpredictable changes in children's attendance could make it difficult to meet regulated ratios for around 12 percent each.

While 63 percent of the ECE service managers thought the staff:child ratio they provided was good, 16 percent thought it (only) adequate, and 19 percent thought it was inadequate, with 60 percent of kindergarten headteachers saying their ratio was inadequate.

Sixty-one percent of the ECE managers thought that their service would meet regulated ratios over the next two years, 21 percent were not sure, and 18 percent foresaw an issue with meeting these ratios.

Staff stability and recruitment

Of the 223 service managers, 85 percent (189) employed paid staff. Playcentre and kindergarten respondents were less likely to have this responsibility. The number of staff employed by the ECE services responding ranged from one (mainly playcentres) to more than 20 (mostly education and care services and home-based networks). However, the number of full-time equivalents was lower, indicating that quite a few staff were working part-time, particularly in education and care and home-based services.

Staff turnover

Many services lose at least one staff member each year. Of the 183 services that gave us information about staff numbers who had left the service in the last year:

- 34 percent had no teacher/educators leave (slightly fewer than the 38 percent in 2003)
- 30 percent had one teacher/educator leave (29 percent in 2003)
- 20 percent had two teacher/educators leave (19 percent in 2003)
- 15 percent had three to five teacher/educators leave (14 percent had three or more leave in 2003).

This loss rate in 2007 is lower than a 2001 survey of childcare staff in day nurseries in England (Cameron, Owen, & Moss, 2001), which found that 75 percent of services had one or more teachers leave in the previous 12 months.

In 2007, the number of teacher/educators leaving as a proportion of the total number of teachers/educators at each of the services that gave us information on the number of teacher/educators leaving was calculated. This provides another picture of staff turnover because it indicates the degree of change within a service. Table 23 gives the average turnover of staff, including those that lost no staff. This gives an overall average of 23 percent, which seems relatively high.

In every service type there were some services that lost no staff, and some that had 100 percent turnover. Some caution is needed around looking at differences between ECE service types, since these figures are based on small numbers (particularly kōhanga reo and home-based services).

Table 23 Turnover rates in ECE services over past year

Turnover	Kindergarten (n = 25) %	Playcentre (n = 23) %	Education and care (n = 115) %	Home- based (n = 11) %	Kōhanga reo (n = 6) %	Overall (n = 180) %
Average rate	24.7	25.8	21.4	38.4	6.7	23

Based on managers' reports, within the education and care sector, community-based services had lower turnover rates than did privately owned services.

Table 24 Percentage of staff leaving the ECE service in the previous 12 months*

Percent of staff leaving the service	Community- based education and care services (n = 56) %	Privately owned education and care services (n = 61) %	
None	30	21	
1–20%	46	30	
21–30%	7	13	
31–40%	9	23	
41–50%	2	7	} 18
>50%	4	11	

* Excluding services that did not mark that they employed paid staff.

Managers who had had at least one teacher/educator leave gave the main reasons for teacher/educators leaving their service as: shifting to another ECE service, including services of the same type, (33 percent), shifting to another location (21 percent), going on parental leave (17 percent), or changing their career (15 percent). It seems likely that many of those who went on parental leave intended returning, and it may be that some of those who shifted to another location would seek employment in another ECE service.

Although teachers report (see below) that a main reason to change jobs between ECE services was to improve their employment conditions, managers were less likely to see this as a reason: 8 percent said that staff who had left found other ECE services were more attractive, 7 percent that other ECE services paid them better, and 6 percent that they gave better employment conditions.

These reasons for shifts were similar to those reported by managers in 2003, except that a much higher percentage said teachers/educators moved to another type of ECE service in 2007 (33 percent compared with 2003 (8 percent)).

In 2007, teachers/educators were also asked whether they had moved to their ECE service from another ECE service, but no time period was specified. Fifty-four percent had moved, especially current kindergarten teachers. Fewer teachers/educators in parent/whānau-led services had moved.

Table 25 Teachers/educators moving to current ECE service from another ECE service

Total (n = 401) %	Education and care (n = 208) %	Kindergarten (n = 110) %	Home-based (n = 14) %	Playcentre (n = 62) %	Kōhanga reo (n = 7) %
54	57	72	64	16	14

The main reasons for moving were for better employment conditions (45 percent of those who had been at another ECE service prior to their current one) and because they shifted to a new location (28 percent). Employment conditions were a stronger reason for moving than pay (17 percent). The importance of employment conditions in ECE teachers' job decisions is consistent with findings from the Locality-based Evaluation of Pathways to the Future: Ngā huarahi arataki (Mitchell & Hodgen, forthcoming) that teacher turnover is associated with competition over employment conditions.

Managers' views of their ability to find and retain staff

Sixty-three percent of the managers who employed staff said they had difficulty finding suitable and qualified teachers for teaching vacancies in their ECE service. This is a somewhat higher rate of difficulty than that for primary principals (53 percent in the 2007 NZCER national survey), but lower than for secondary principals (76 percent) in the 2006 NZCER national survey). However, ECE difficulties in finding suitable teaching staff are also complicated by the policy move from having no requirement for all ECE staff to have a qualification, to the target of having all ECE staff qualified and registered or in training, in 2012. Education and care centres (74 percent) and home-based networks (73 percent) had the most difficulty finding suitable and qualified staff, and kindergartens the least (26 percent).

A limited number of suitable applicants was the main reason given for having difficulty finding both suitable and qualified staff (73 percent of those who had difficulty finding suitable and qualified teachers). However, 48 percent of those who had difficulty said they had no applications from qualified teachers—and this is 30 percent of all those managers employing staff. Competition from other ECE services that offered more pay was given as a reason by 39 percent of the managers who had had difficulty finding staff. The other main reason was the remote location of the service (22 percent of those who had difficulty finding staff).

All teacher-led ECE services were required at the end of 2007 (a few months after this survey) to have at least 50 percent of their teachers with a qualification recognised by the New Zealand Teachers Council, i.e., allowing them to be a registered teacher. All but one of the kindergarten managers who employed staff said all their staff met this requirement. Only 15 percent of the education and care services were at the 100 percent registration level, but 88 percent were at or above the 50 percent level. Some of these and those who were not then meeting the requirements had staff in training, or with their registration currently in process. Difficulties mentioned in

relation to becoming registered included staff not working enough hours to make it worthwhile, or not being able to afford the cost of training and registration, not understanding the registration process, and being unable to access a local registration supervisor.

Just over half those employing staff said they had difficulty recruiting and retaining registered staff. Most of those who had this difficulty were from education and care services (85 percent). To address their difficulties, education and care service managers were training staff (79 percent), offering higher salaries than others in the locality (32 percent), offering recruitment incentives (30 percent), or using government initiatives (24 percent).

A quarter of the managers said they had experienced problems over the past 12 months in fulfilling the requirements of the staff hour count for their government funding. Almost all of these were from education and care services. Private services were more likely to have had difficulty than community-based (52 percent cf. 30 percent).

The main reasons for experiencing difficulty in meeting the requirements were providing cover for teachers on leave (82 percent who had difficulty), for teachers taking part in professional development (63 percent), for teachers during their breaks (50 percent), and for teachers on field-based training (36 percent).

Fifteen percent of the managers said they would have difficulty meeting the requirement to have 50 percent or more of their staff being registered teachers: 71 percent of these were education and care centres, with most of the rest in playcentres. Another 8 percent of managers were unsure.

The main difficulty around this was in recruitment (mentioned by almost all those who foresaw difficulty), followed by retention of registered teachers (mentioned by just under half of these), and getting already qualified teachers registered (mentioned by a quarter).

ECE teachers' views of their career

Most teachers/educators (76 percent) regarded their work in ECE as a longer term career, 17 percent were not sure, and 7 percent regarded it as short term, especially playcentre educators. Thirteen percent of teacher/educators were thinking of leaving their current job in the next 12 months.

Teacher/educators were asked to imagine what they would be doing in five years time, and choose the most likely response from a list. Though three-quarters had said they thought of their ECE work as a longer term career, only 54 percent imagined themselves in an early childhood teaching position in New Zealand. There was a reasonable level of uncertainty (19 percent of teacher/educators said they were “not sure” what they would be doing).

Table 26 **Teacher/educators' thoughts about their work in five years time**

Reason	Total (n = 401) %	Types differing markedly from overall proportion
Teaching in an ECE service	31	Kōhanga reo (57 percent)
Working in an ECE service at a senior level, e.g., head teacher, supervisor, senior teacher	23	Playcentre (7 percent)
Not sure	19	Playcentre (34 percent), home-based (33 percent) kindergarten (25 percent)
Retired	7	Home-based (36 percent)
Left ECE for a different kind of employment	6	
Working in another educational institution, e.g., as lecturer, professional development adviser	4	
Working as a primary school teacher	4	Playcentre (13 percent)
At university or in further education	3	Kōhanga reo (14 percent)
Teaching in ECE overseas	2	Home-based (14 percent)
Left ECE to be a parent	2	
Left ECE for travel	1	

Employment conditions

ECE services have different practices in relation to employment of teacher/educators. We outline those for the main service types other than kōhanga reo (since we had few responses from the latter).

Kindergartens are required to employ qualified registered teachers. They are employed under a national collective agreement covering all teachers, head teachers, and senior teachers. The Secretary for Education (MOE) and the teachers' union are party to the agreement. From 1 July 2002, pay parity between kindergarten teachers and teachers in the primary and secondary sector began to be implemented (over three years). Hence in kindergartens there are no variations in pay and conditions nationwide, although there may be some variation in hours of contact time and noncontact time depending on the operation of the kindergarten.

Education and care centres at the end of 2007, had to employ registered teachers for at least 50 percent of regulated staffing positions. There is no national collective agreement, but the teachers' union, NZEI Te Riu Roa, negotiates the Early Childhood Education Collective Agreement covering a small percentage of education and care centres. Services receiving funding to reflect their proportion of qualified registered teachers must verify that the pay rates for teachers are at least the first step of the salary scale for qualified teachers on the Early Childhood Education

Collective Agreement. This step does not reflect the range of pay rates for higher qualifications, experience, and responsibilities that are available to teachers covered by the collective agreement. Pay rates and conditions have traditionally varied in this sector.

Home-based co-ordinators have the same requirements as education and care centre teachers/educators. There is no national collective agreement and rates of pay and conditions vary. Home-based educators have a minimal qualification requirement and are either paid a wage or reimbursed expenses.

Playcentres may employ a supervisor, but volunteer parent educators also work in the education programme, or run the programme entirely by themselves. The educators collectively must hold playcentre qualifications up to higher levels. There is no national collective agreement and pay rates and conditions for employed educators vary. Parent educators are generally not employed, but increasingly playcentres may employ a paid supervisor.

Employment relationships may also vary depending on ownership. Nationally, over half the education and care centres and some home-based networks are privately owned or managed by a private provider with profits paid back to the owner for commercial purposes (see Introduction). Other education and care and home-based services, and all kindergartens, playcentres, and hospital services are nonprofit community-based.

Traditionally, most for-profit centres had owner operators, with some seeking just a living for themselves. However, at least one private chain has operated since 1972 (Kindercare). During 2002, two new international companies that had bought early childhood centres in New Zealand, Kidicorp and ABC, were listed on the sharemarket. These corporate childcare chains have expanded rapidly: Kidicorp owns about 75 New Zealand centres but is no longer a publicly listed company. ABC owns 116 centres in New Zealand, and in 2006 owned 1158 centres in Australia, 1100 centres in the US, and 47 centres in the UK (Campbell, 2006). In June 2008, four directors of ABC Learning Centres sold about \$52 million in shares after a 42 percent fall in profits and a collapse in share market price (Fraser, 2008). These developments raise questions about whether profits for shareholders detract from investing in the educational service itself, particularly employment conditions which are a costly expenditure item in education and care centres. We analysed employment conditions, and involvement in decision making by ownership within the education and care sample to find out whether the poorer conditions in for-profit centres reported in other studies (Mitchell, 2002) and in the NZCER 2003 national survey were also occurring in the education and care centres in this national survey. We also analysed teacher pay.

Rates of pay

National picture

Three hundred and thirty-two of 401 teachers/educators (82 percent) supplied their rate of pay either as an hourly rate (134) or a gross annual income (198). The high nonresponse rate was largely from playcentre educators who were not employed for pay.

In the tables that follow, we report data for categories of respondent where there were at least four responses. For this reason, no data for kōhanga reo are reported.

Table 27 Average gross hourly wages and annual salary* for co-ordinating supervisors, supervisors/head teachers, assistant supervisors, and teachers/educators combined (excluding nonrespondents)

Service	Hourly wage \$	Annual salary \$
Kindergarten	23.64 (N = 9)	48,123 (N = 76)
Education and care	19.99 (N = 138)	46,000 (N = 53)
Playcentre	14.87 (N = 36)	
Home-based	14.33 (N = 12)	

* Annual salary of part-time teachers/educators has been adjusted to be expressed as a full-time salary using information on teachers/educators' hours per week, and calculating full-time as 40 hours per week.

Kindergarten teachers were paid the most, whether their pay was expressed as an hourly wage or annual salary, followed by teachers/educators in education and care centres. Kōhanga reo kaiako had the lowest hourly pay rates (but low numbers), and playcentre supervisors had the lowest salary (but low numbers).

Kindergarten teachers had a higher minimum (\$31,657) and maximum salary (\$71,429) than teachers/educators in education and care centres (minimum—\$11,668; maximum—\$63,197).

Rates of pay were analysed according to the position held by the teacher/educator in the ECE setting, since co-ordinating supervisors, supervisors/head teachers, or assistant supervisors, who all hold positions of responsibility, might be expected to be paid more than other teachers/educators. Similar pay differentials between each of the service types were found in relation to position, whether the pay was received as an annual salary or an hourly rate. In the tables that follow, data are reported for categories where there were at least four respondents. For this reason, no data on kōhanga reo are reported.

Table 28 Average gross annualised salary* for different positions in education and care services and kindergartens

Position	Kindergarten \$	Education and care \$
Supervisor/head teacher	63,032 (N = 9)	47,397 (N = 24)
Assistant supervisor		40,497 (N = 7)
Teacher/educator	47,692 (N = 67)	41,822 (N = 19)

* Annual salary of part-time teachers/educators has been adjusted to be expressed as a full-time salary using information on teachers/educators' hours per week, and calculating full-time as 40 hours per week.

Table 29 **Average gross hourly wages for different positions in education and care services and kindergartens**

Position	Kindergarten \$	Education and care \$	Playcentre \$
Co-ordinating supervisor			13.47 (N = 7)
Supervisor/head teacher		23.43 (N = 29)	15.28 (N = 15)
Assistant supervisor		21.58 (N = 6)	12.25 (N = 4)
Teacher/educator	24.48 (N = 7)	18.63 (N = 91)	13.29 (N = 7)

Comparison of rates of pay in private and community-based education and care services

Teachers/educators from private education and care centres (80 percent of teachers in education and care centres responding) were more likely to be paid a wage and supply their pay rates as an hourly rate compared with teachers/educators from community-based centres (50 percent of respondents). Supervisors were paid somewhat more in community-based centres, but teachers/educators were paid slightly more in private centres.

Table 30 **Average gross hourly wages for different positions in private and community-based education and care centres**

Position	Private education and care \$	Community-based education and care \$
Supervisor/head teacher	22.84 (N = 15)	24.05 (N = 14)
Assistant supervisor		22.75 (N = 4)
Teacher/educator	18.98 (N = 51)	18.20 (N = 40)

Table 31 **Average gross annual salary for different positions in private and community-based education and care centres**

Position	Private education and care \$	Community-based education and care \$
Supervisor/head teacher	46,350 (N = 32)	48,284 (N = 28)
Assistant supervisor		41,096 (N = 5)
Teacher/educator	42,858 (N = 4)	41,526 (N = 14)

Leave entitlements

National picture

The statutory minimum annual leave entitlement was raised to four weeks on 1 April 2007.

Most teachers/educators in education and care centres (70 percent) and kōhanga reo kaiako (71 percent) had four weeks' paid annual leave per year. This was also the most common entitlement for those playcentre educators who were employed. By comparison, most kindergarten teachers had more generous annual provisions of six weeks or more.

For most employees in New Zealand there is a minimum provision of five days' paid sick leave a year after the first six months of continuous employment and an additional five days' paid sick leave after each subsequent 12 month period.

The average number of days' sick leave per year by service type were:

- kindergarten, 8.1 days
- kōhanga reo, 8 days
- education and care, 7.8 days
- home-based, 2 days
- playcentre, 1 day.

Comparison of leave entitlements in private and community-based education and care services

A higher percentage (80 percent) of teachers/educators in privately owned education and care centres had only the statutory minimum annual leave entitlement of four weeks compared with teachers/educators employed in community-based centres (60 percent).

Table 32 Annual leave entitlement by private and community-based education and care types

Length of annual leave	Private education and care (n = 108) %	Community-based education and care (n = 100) %	Total (n = 208) %
4 weeks	80	60	70
5 weeks	6	15	10
6 weeks	3	4	4
7 weeks or more	3	13	8
Not sure	4	5	4
Other*	2	1	1
No response	4	2	3

* "Other" responses included temporary contract, none, and hourly rate.

Overall, teachers/educators in privately owned centres had less sick leave than teachers/educators employed in community-based centres.

Table 33 **Annual sick leave entitlement by private and community-based education and care types**

Days of annual sick leave	Private education and care (n = 108) %	Community-based education and care (n = 100) %	Total (n = 208) %
5 days	50	25	38
6–7 days	19	9	14
8–10 days	23	27	25
11 days or more	3	36	18
No response	6	5	5

In comparison with 2003, the amount of annual leave teachers/educators receive has gone up, probably because of the change to the statutory annual leave entitlement in 2007. This finding points to the value of legislated or binding entitlements rather than employer discretion for levels of employment conditions that are deemed to be important. Yet, although the base has improved for education and care, the gap between the two groups has not closed. A similar differential between the two groups was found in 2003, with entitlements for both annual leave and sick leave favouring teachers/educators in community-based centres.

Employer-subsidised benefits

National picture

A third of teachers/educators belonged to a superannuation scheme. Education and care, home-based service, and kōhanga reo respondents tended to belong to KiwiSaver, and kindergarten teachers/educators tended to belong to another scheme. A higher percentage of playcentre educators did not belong to a scheme (81 percent, compared with 65 percent overall).

Of those who did belong to a superannuation scheme, 48 percent said the employer made contributions, 35 percent said the employer did not make contributions, and 12 percent were not sure (5 percent did not respond). Kindergarten teachers were more likely than others to say the employer made a contribution (78 percent).

The most common other employer-subsidised benefit received was an employer-subsidised or free carpark. Teachers/educators in education and care centres were more likely than others to receive this benefit. Playcentre educators were less likely to have benefits, and more likely to list “no benefits” under “other”.

Comparison of employer-subsidised benefits in private and community-based education and care services

In 2007, there were no differences between groups of teachers/educators in private and community-based education and care centres in their receipt of subsidised work benefits. We did not ask about employer-subsidised work benefits in 2003.

Paid noncontact hours and staff meeting time

National picture

Fewer teachers/educators reported having no noncontact time in 2007 (13 percent) compared with 2003 (21 percent). In particular, far fewer teachers/educators in education and care centres reported having no noncontact time in 2007 (7 percent) compared with 2003 (25 percent).

Twenty-seven percent of teachers/educators reported having up to three hours' noncontact time, 22 percent had three to five hours' noncontact time, and 28 percent had six hours' or more noncontact time per week.

Kindergarten teachers had the most paid noncontact hours per week, with 76 percent reporting having six hours or more per week, compared with 12 percent of education and care teachers/educators, 7 percent of home-based service educators, 2 percent of playcentre educators, and no kōhanga reo kaiako. However, as reported in the next section, despite having more noncontact time than other teachers, kindergarten teachers also reported higher hours of unpaid work per week (outside working time). Forty-one percent of kindergarten teachers said they worked seven or more hours per week extra. It seems likely that the work, frequently undertaken by only two or three kindergarten teachers, of assessment and planning, and working with families and outside agencies etc. for the large number of children attending kindergartens (frequently 60 to 90 children) may place particular workload burdens on kindergarten teachers. It is also notable that kindergarten teachers were making greater usage of the new assessment resources, *Kei tua o te Pae. Assessment for Learning: Early childhood exemplars* (Ministry of Education, 2005b), and were more likely to be using data to develop a relevant programme for groups of children, and to involve children in assessment than were other teachers/educators.

Most playcentre educators, home-based educators, and kōhanga reo kaiako did not respond to this question, had no noncontact time, or had up to three hours per week.

Table 34 Number of paid noncontact hours for teachers/educators per week

Noncontact hours	Kindergarten (n = 110) %	Playcentre (n = 62) %	Education and care (n = 208) %	Home-based (n = 14) %	Te Kōhanga Reo (n = 7) %	Total (n = 401) %
None	5	39	7	43	57	13
Up to 3	4	21	44	0	14	27
3–5	11	15	31	7	14	22
6–10	51	2	9	0	0	19
11–15	22	0	2	7	0	7
16–20	1	0	0	0	0	1
21 or more	2	0	1	0	0	1
No response	5	24	5	43	14	9

The variation in the number of hours for kindergarten teachers may have been because of changes in some kindergartens' operation from fairly standard sessional hours, or because some teachers/educators did not count the time from the end of an afternoon session to the end of the working day.

Assessment, planning, and evaluation was the work that teachers/educators undertook most frequently during noncontact time, followed by discussing work with other teachers/educators, collecting data and working on documentation, preparing resources, and administration.

Most ECE services held staff meetings at least once a month, with 31 percent holding them once a week and 25 percent once a fortnight. Thirty-six percent of teachers/educators said staff meetings were held only every four months or less frequently, including 2 percent that never held them. Twenty-two percent of educators in home-based services and 8 percent from playcentres said they never held them. It was more common for playcentre educator meetings to be held once a month (52 percent) and for kindergarten meetings to be once a week (53 percent). Frequency of staff meetings was similar to 2003.

Comparison of noncontact hours and staff meeting time in private and community-based education and care centres

On average, teachers/educators in community-based education and care centres had slightly higher amounts of weekly paid noncontact hours (3.7 hours per week) than did teachers/educators in private centres (3.2 hours per week). Seven percent of teachers/educators in community-based centres and in private education and care centres had no noncontact time.

There was a trend for staff meetings in community-based centres to be more frequent than in private centres. Sixty-six percent of community-based centres held meetings once a fortnight or

more often compared with 49 percent of private education and care centres, according to teachers/educators.

Table 35 Frequency of staff meetings by private and community-based education and care types

Frequency of staff meetings	Private education and care (n = 108) %	Community-based education and care (n = 100) %	Total (n = 208) %
Once a fortnight or more often	49	66	57
Once every three or four weeks	38	21	30
Once every five weeks or less frequently	11	9	10
No response	2	4	3

A similar differential between the two groups was found in 2003 for frequency of staff meetings, with staff meetings being held more frequently in community-based centres.

There were no differences between groups of teachers/educators in whether they were paid to attend staff meetings (82 percent were paid in both service types). We did not ask whether participants were paid to attend staff meetings in 2003.

Teacher morale, workload, and involvement in decisionmaking

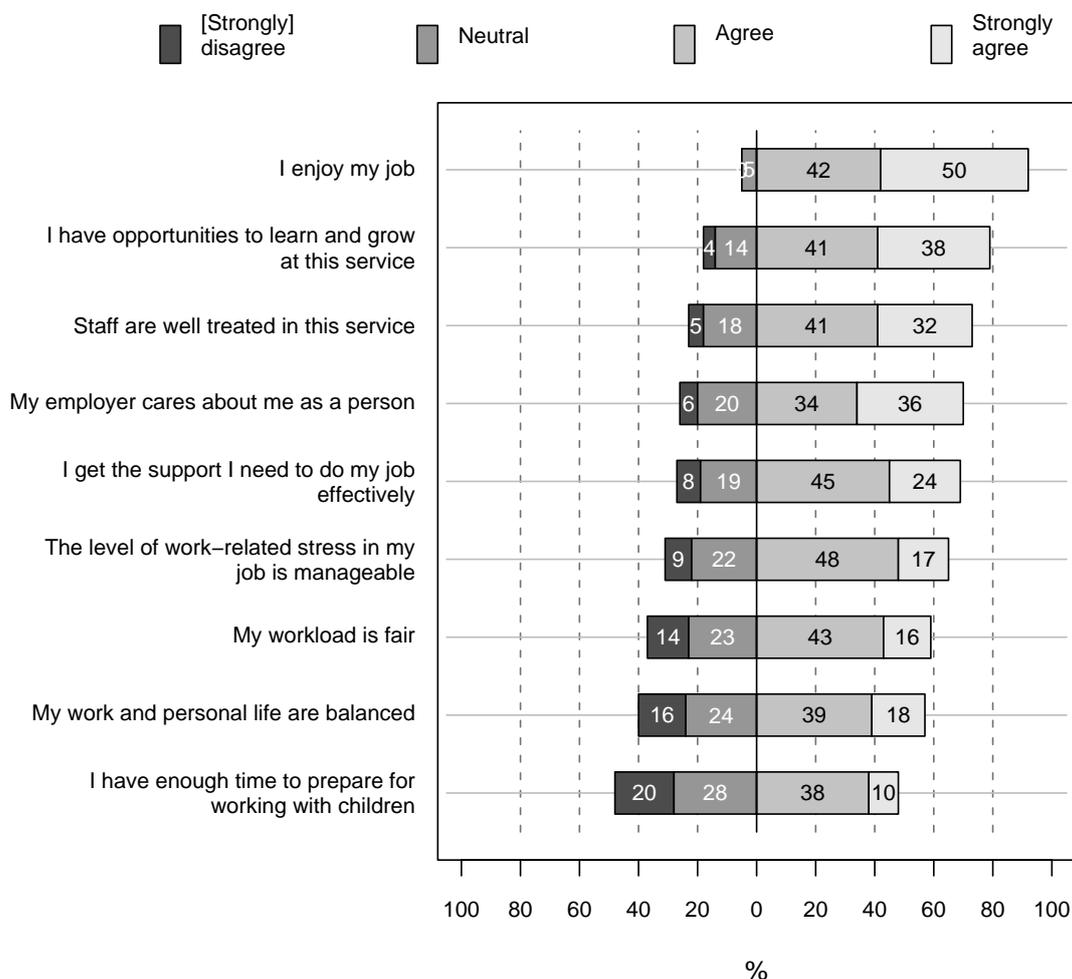
National picture

Teacher morale levels were high, with 81 percent saying their morale was “good” or “very good”. ECE teacher morale was slightly higher than in 2003 when 73 percent rated their morale as “good” or “very good”, and higher than for primary teachers (68 percent rated their morale as “good” or “very good” in the 2007 NZCER national survey) and secondary teachers (63 percent rated their morale as “good” or “very good” in the 2006 NZCER national survey). This improvement in morale levels may be related to the improvements in resources, professional development, and funding for ECE over this period.

Ninety-three percent of teachers/educators “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they enjoyed their work. Around two-thirds were positive about their opportunities for learning, their treatment, and the support they received to do their work effectively.

However, only 59 percent of teachers/educators thought their workload was fair or manageable, 57 percent that their work and personal life was balanced, and 46 percent that they had enough time to prepare for their work with children.

Figure 2 ECE teachers' views of their job and workload



Most teachers/educators put in extra hours outside paid work time, mainly up to six hours per week. But 18 percent were putting in 7–10 additional hours per week, and 10 percent were working longer than this. Kindergarten teachers reported higher hours of unpaid work time, with 41 percent doing seven or more hours per week extra. Kindergarten teachers were more likely than others to disagree that their work and life were balanced (30 percent, compared with 16 percent overall), that they had time to prepare for their work (28 percent, compared with 20 percent overall), and that their workload was fair (31 percent, compared with 14 percent overall). They were also more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that their employer cares about them as a person (16 percent, compared with 3 percent of education and care teachers/educators, one home-based educator, and one playcentre educator, perhaps because their employer was less likely to be in the same centre. These were the only significant differences in teacher views about their job that were related to service type.

Most teachers/educators thought they were part of their service's decision-making team on processes directly related to the curriculum. A higher percentage of kindergarten teachers said

they were part of the decision-making team in respect to strategic planning and evaluation, budget allocation, and planning for special needs. Kōhanga reo kaiako were also more likely to be part of the decision-making team in respect to strategic planning and evaluation, but less likely to be involved in policy development and review. This may be because Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust undertakes policy development roles.

Home-based educators were less likely to rate themselves as part of the decision-making team with respect to strategic, budgetary, and policy development roles, and planning for special needs. These roles are most likely undertaken by the umbrella organisation for the home-based network. A minority of playcentre educators participated in decision making with respect to staff appraisal (many do not employ paid staff), and were also less likely to be part of the decision-making team with respect to curriculum resources. It may be that an elected office holder takes this responsibility for resources.

Table 36 Teachers/educators' participation in decision making

Aspect of work	Percentage rating selves as part of decision-making team on this aspect (<i>n</i> = 401) %	Types differing markedly from overall proportion
Planning for children's learning	86	Home-based (64%)
Communicating with parents about learning	82	
Assessment and evaluation	80	
Curriculum resources	72	Playcentre (50%)
Professional development	63	
Strategic planning and evaluation	62	Kōhanga reo (86%), kindergarten (76%), home-based (35%)
Policy development and review	55	Kōhanga reo (29%), home-based (21%)
Staff appraisal	54	Home-based (21%), playcentre (40%), kōhanga reo (43%)
Planning for special needs	51	Kindergarten (62%), home-based (21%)
Budget allocation	30	Kindergarten (51%), home-based (7%)

Comparison of teacher workload, morale, and involvement in decision making in private and community-based education and care services

Overall, there were no differences between these teacher groups in teachers/educators' ratings of workload and job satisfaction, support for the job, work/life balance, preparation time, treatment of staff, fairness of workload, work-related stress, opportunities for learning, and overall morale.

Teachers/educators in private centres were less likely to be part of the decision-making team with respect to planning for children's learning, communicating with parents about children's learning, curriculum resources, policy development and review, and assessment and evaluation than were teachers/educators in community-based education and care centres.

Table 37 Teachers/educators' participation in decision making by private and community-based education and care service types

Part of decision-making team in aspect of work	Private education and care (n = 108) %	Community-based education and care (n = 100) %	Total (n = 208) %
Planning for children's learning	81	93	87
Communicating with parents about learning	73	86	79
Assessment and evaluation	71	88	79
Curriculum resources	60	84	72
Professional development	62	74	68
Strategic planning and evaluation	53	54	53
Policy development and review	49	65	57
Staff appraisal	55	54	54
Planning for special needs	46	52	49
Budget allocation	21	23	22

In 2003, we found similar patterns in participation in decision making on each of the areas canvassed, but with teachers/educators in community-based centres more likely to rate themselves as part of the decision-making team.

Overall comments

Teacher/educator morale levels were very high, and higher than in 2003. Most teachers/educators enjoy their work, are positive about their opportunities for learning, the treatment they receive, and support to undertake their work. A significant minority find their workload and work-personal life balance difficult to manage, and feel they do not have enough time to prepare for their work with children. This was particularly true of kindergarten teachers, who have the highest number of children in their services.

Nevertheless, teacher/educator turnover remains high, and there is a shortage of suitable and qualified staff, particularly among education and care services, and home-based networks. Thirty percent of all managers employing staff said they had no applications from qualified teachers.

- Of services employing paid staff, 66 percent had one or more teacher leave in the last 12 months (62 percent in 2003).
- The average turnover rate per service was 23 percent.

Staff turnover is likely to be associated with instability for children, administrative costs, and time spent on recruiting staff. Turnover makes it harder for services to sustain service wellbeing and build on professional development undertaken when new staff members have not participated in the professional development experiences. There are also costs to teacher education if a teacher is lost to the ECE sector.

It is also somewhat concerning that, while 76 percent of teachers/educators regarded their work as a long-term career, only 54 percent imagined themselves in an ECE teaching position in five years time. There was a high level of uncertainty (19 percent of teachers/educators were “not sure” what they would be doing).

Both employment conditions and personal reasons seemed to be key reasons for staff turnover.

Kindergarten teachers were paid the most, whether their rates of pay were expressed as an hourly rate or annual salary. These teachers are part of the state sector and have the advantage of a national collective employment agreement linking their salaries with primary and secondary teachers' salaries. This pay differential favouring state sector kindergarten teachers was also found for each specific teaching position (head teacher/supervisor, teacher/educator) where there were sufficient numbers to analyse pay data. Unfortunately, a comparison with 2003 was not able to be made so it is not known whether the pay gap between kindergarten staff and others has changed.

In regard to employment conditions, a marked improvement is evident between the 2003 and 2007 surveys with teachers/educators' access to paid noncontact time. This time is used by teachers/educators to carry out processes, such as planning, assessment, evaluation, and review, that contribute to effective teaching and learning.

Another improvement was in the amount of annual leave teachers receive, most probably because of the change to the statutory minimum entitlements from three weeks to four weeks from 1 July 2007. This finding points to the value of regulated or binding entitlements rather than employer discretion for employment conditions that are deemed to be important for an occupation.

The pattern of differences found between employment conditions of teachers/educators in private and community-based education and care centres in 2003 continued, but with a few improvements. In both 2003 and 2007, teachers employed in private education and care centres had poorer annual leave entitlements, slightly lower amounts of noncontact time (although the base was higher in 2007), and were less likely to be involved in decision making as a member of

the team. Private education and care services also had higher levels of staff turnover than community-based education and care services in both years. In 2003, teachers in private education and care centres were more likely to rate their workload as excessive: this differential was no longer apparent in 2007.

It may be that the competitive environment for qualified teachers, arising out of regulations, and the increased levels of government funding have contributed to employers offering similar pay rates in the private and community-based education and care sectors. The question then arises of what further national approaches might result in more even employment conditions across all the ECE services, so that turnover rates are lowered, and children in private services are not disadvantaged by higher staff turnover. It would be useful for the MOE to undertake some more detailed work on ECE staff salaries and conditions, in relation to turnover and exit patterns from the ECE sector, since these do affect the capacity of ECE services. Because there is a link between employment conditions and staff stability and the retention of qualified and experienced teachers, the patterns found in this survey do raise questions about whether a market approach to staff employment conditions is appropriate in an ECE context, and whether a national collective employment agreement for all teachers should be negotiated with the MOE as a party so that the salary and conditions gap favouring state sector kindergarten teachers is closed.

Seventy percent of the ECE services responding were operating above regulated requirements for adult:child ratios. However, 27 percent said they sometimes struggled to meet the regulations, mainly because of the limited availability of relievers, and only 61 percent of the service managers were confident they could meet regulated ratios over the next two years.

Not all those who provided the regulated ratio thought it was a good ratio, with a high proportion of kindergarten staff saying it was inadequate.

7. Management support

Eighty percent of the ECE service managers responding said their service had experienced some changes in the time usually spent on management and governance tasks over the last three years. These changes were:

- 74 percent spent more time on administration
- 50 percent spent more time on financial matters
- 49 percent spent more time on review
- 44 percent spent more time on strategic planning
- 35 percent spent less time on policy development.

A few (less than 5 percent overall) were spending less time on one or more of these management tasks. Although there is evidence that playcentres, as parent/whānau-run centres, are struggling with administration, they were less likely than other services to say they were experiencing an increase in time spent on these aspects, other than strategic planning. This may be because there is a limit to the time that volunteers are able to give, and that fewer of the policy changes of the last few years have directly affected playcentres. Home-based networks were also less likely to say they were spending time on most of these matters, other than strategic planning, perhaps because many of these were part of a national organisation.

Most of the ECE service managers said that their service belonged to an organisation that provided them with some form of support. Of the 15 percent that did not, most were education and care services, and two home-based networks. Kindergartens and playcentres have their own associations. Education and care services were most likely to belong to a national early childcare organisation (e.g., NZ Childcare Association or Early Childhood Council), the community childcare association if they were community-based; some also belonged to church-based associations, a corporate body, or private company. Most of the home-based networks belonged to a national organisation (such as Barnardos). Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust supports kōhanga reo.

The following table lists the support that ECE services get from outside organisations (other than the MOE). Kindergartens and kōhanga reo have the most support from—or are seen as part of—wider organisations. Education and care services are most likely to be standing alone.

Table 38 Outside organisational support for ECE service management

Form of support	Percentage overall (<i>n</i> = 223) %	Types differing markedly from overall proportion
Professional development	74	Kindergarten (98%), playcentre (97%), education and care (58%)
Professional advice and support	66	Kindergarten (94%)
Management advice and support	65	Kindergarten (90%), playcentre (89%), education and care (48%)
Policies	58	Kindergarten (98%), playcentre (94%), education and care (32%)
Interpretation of govt policy and legislation	58	Kindergarten (82%), home-based network (73%)
Teaching and learning resources	50	playcentre (89%)
Staff employment	45	Kindergarten (100%), education and care (25%)
Payment of staff salaries	45	Kindergarten (98%), education and care (25%)
Accounting	39	Kindergarten (84%), education and care (27%), playcentre (17%)
Administration	37	Kindergarten (76%), kōhanga reo (67%), playcentre (53%)
Budgeting	32	Kindergarten (68%), kōhanga reo (67%), education and care (20%)
Making applications for grants	28	Kindergarten (58%), education and care (15%)
Discounted benefits	27	
Lower rental costs	11	Kōhanga reo (33%), home-based network (0%)

Fifty-seven percent of the ECE services also employed an administrator, on a part-time basis (the average number of hours employed was 20.7, ranging from 3.5 hours to 33 hours). Administrators were most likely to be employed in education and care centres, home-based networks, and kōhanga reo.

Need for further support, training, and advice

The ECE service managers had mixed views about their need for any (further) advice. When we asked them to identify any areas in which they had needs from the list covered in the previous table, 43 percent identified at least one area. Interest was greatest in getting discounted benefits, making applications for grants, professional and management advice and support, and teaching and learning resources (between 10–18 percent).

ECE teacher interest in holding positions of responsibility

There is a healthy interest among ECE teachers in becoming a supervisor or holding a “person responsible” role: 42 percent of teachers expressed interest in this role. Those who were interested would like to advance their career (75 percent of those interested), wanted the challenge (also 75 percent), were interested in implementing their own ideas (61 percent), would like the higher salary (56 percent), or liked the idea of taking responsibility (50 percent).

Overall comments

The managers who responded to this survey occupied a range of roles: some were more focused on administration than others, and this may account for the greater reporting of more time spent on administration over the last three years than the other areas we asked about. It is heartening to see more time spent on strategic planning and review. It is also heartening to see the level of interest among teachers in becoming ECE service leaders.

Most managers reported that they were getting some ongoing support, so that few services were standing alone. Education and care services were the ones most likely to be receiving less support from national associations or organisations than others. A significant minority would like more support.

8. Roles, responsibilities, and training of committee members

Traditionally, volunteers have worked in community-based early childhood services in a range of capacities. The 1996 Future Directions project (Early Childhood Education Project, 1996), found volunteers were involved in the education programme, administration, maintenance, management, fundraising, training, and professional development. The pool of people for this work was almost always the parents/caregivers (usually women) of the children attending the centre. The project team found that as a consequence of the Before Five changes in educational administration, volunteers were facing increased workload, such as administering funding returns, acting in an employer role, and managing salaries. Evidence of difficulties of recruiting and retaining parents and caregivers onto management committees/boards was reported.

In the schools sector, the Government provides some resourcing and support for volunteers:

- an operational grant from which a (nominal) sitting fee can be paid
- contracts for training trustee members
- funding for the NZ School Trustees Association to provide certain outputs ranging from industrial advice to administration of study awards.

In early childhood services, there is no representative body like the NZ School Trustees Association. Some umbrella organisations such as playcentre and kindergarten associations offer support for volunteers. The MOE published a print resource in June 2004: *Governing and Managing your Early Childhood Service*, and offers advice and support in relation to licensing.

This section focuses on the work of volunteers on parent committees.

Reasons for serving on the committee

Committee parents are keen to contribute their areas of expertise to support ECE services. The reasons for parents serving on the committee or management were to help their own child/children (77 percent), contribute to community (66 percent), and improve outcomes for children (32 percent).

Around a third of parents wanted to gain something for themselves—to meet other parents (35 percent), gain skills (28 percent), and learn more about children’s development (22 percent). More playcentre parents than other parents wanted to gain skills (44 percent).

Half of the parents serving on an ECE service committee decided to join it because they were asked.

Most of these parents did gain from their committee/management work, especially:

- increased understanding of the ECE programme (68 percent)
- the satisfaction of making a contribution (67 percent)
- seeing improvements for children (64 percent)
- friendship and social support (61 percent).

Consistent with their aspirations, a higher percentage of playcentre parents than other parent committee members said that they gained increased understanding of children, increased skills in working with others, and confidence in abilities and skills. A higher percentage of these parents also gained a sense of belonging, and friendship and social support.

Table 39 **Gains for committee members from their committee service**

Elements of role	Percentage rating this as an important key element of committee role (n = 232) %	Types differing markedly from overall proportion
Increased understanding of the ECE programme	70	
Satisfaction of contributing to the ECE service	67	Education and care (85%)
Seeing improvements for children	64	
Friendship and social support	61	Playcentre (73%), education and care (49%), kōhanga reo (17%)
Sense of belonging	48	Playcentre (66%)
Enjoyment	47	Kōhanga reo (17%)
Confidence in abilities and skills	37	Playcentre (48%)
Increased skills in working with others	35	Playcentre (48%)
Increased understanding of children	28	Playcentre (40%)

Role of committee members

Most committee members in all service types (66 percent), excluding private services which do not generally have a committee structure and were not sent committee questionnaires, regarded financial decision making as an “important” element of their role. Other roles rated as “important” varied according to service type:

- Education and care, playcentre, and kōhanga reo respondents were more likely to rate governance roles (strategic planning, policy development, and reviewing service performance) as important.

- Kindergarten committee members were more likely to rate fundraising and organising working bees as important. Perhaps the difference is because many of the ECE governance roles are played by kindergarten association councils rather than kindergarten committees.
- Education and care service committee members (43 percent) and kōhanga reo whānau management (four of six) regarded their role in recruiting/employing staff as important.

Table 40 **Key elements of committee role**

Elements of role	Percentage rating this as an important key element of committee role (<i>n</i> = 232) %	Types differing markedly from overall proportion
Financial decision making	66	
Organising fund raising and working bees	61	Kindergarten (88%)
Strategic planning	48	Kindergarten (22%)
Supporting parents to be involved	47	
Representing parents in the ECE service	39	
Property management	38	
Policy development	30	Kindergarten (7%)
Community liaison	28	
Monitoring/reviewing performance of the service	25	Kindergarten (4%)
Recruiting/employing staff	20	Kōhanga reo (67%), education and care (43%), kindergarten (1%)

Hours spent on committee work and levels of responsibility

On average, committee members/whānau management spent 2.7 hours per week on ECE committee work. At the high end, 8 percent of committee members were averaging seven hours a week or more on ECE service work. The average hours were highest for playcentre office holders (3.5 hours) and kōhanga reo whānau (4.3 hours) compared with 2.4 hours for education and care and 2.1 hours for kindergarten committee members.

Consistent with spending more hours on ECE service work, playcentre and kōhanga reo respondents were also more likely to rate the overall amount of responsibility as “too much”—38 percent of playcentre respondents, and four of six kōhanga reo respondents, compared with 10 percent of education and care and of kindergarten respondents. One of the main things playcentre and kōhanga reo respondents would like to change was to reduce workload and paperwork (see below). High levels of volunteer administration workload in playcentre have been found to be

problematic in another recent study (Mitchell, Royal Tangaere, Mara, & Wylie, 2006) and in NZCER's 2003 national survey.

Support and training for committee work

When asked to choose from a list the things that they would like to change, around half the committee members (47 percent) would like more support from other parents. There was also interest from a reasonable proportion in improving their knowledge, or getting more support from government agencies.

There were service type differences in the things committee members would like to change:

- Kindergarten committee members would like more support from other parents. It may be that this support is especially important to fundraising and working bees that kindergarten committee members rated as key elements of their roles.
- Parent/whānau-led service committee members (playcentre and kōhanga reo) would like reduced workload/paper work.
- Kōhanga reo committee members/office holders would like improved knowledge and training, and also more support from MOE and Education Review Office (ERO). They would like to work more closely with parents. (But bear in mind that numbers were low.)
- Education and care committee members would like a clearer distinction between governance and management. This links to the key role that 40 percent of these committee members said they had in recruiting and employing staff.

Table 41 **Main things committee members would like to change about their role**

Things about the role	Percentage of committee members wanting to change this aspect (<i>n</i> = 232) %	Types differing markedly from overall proportion
Receive more support from parents	47	Kindergarten (61%)
Improve/knowledge/training	28	Kōhanga reo (50%)
Nothing	23	
Reduce workload/paper work	21	Playcentre (39%), kōhanga reo (33%)
Get paid for committee work	17	Kindergarten (7%)
Receive more support from MOE or ERO	17	Kōhanga reo (33%)
Receive more support from education experts	12	
Work more closely with parents	11	Kōhanga reo (50%)
Have clearer distinction between governance and management	9	Education and care (20%)

A third of respondents received no formal training or support for their role, and 37 percent would like more information or training.

Where formal support was received, the most common form was an information kit (especially for playcentre and kindergarten respondents), followed by a one-off session or seminar focused on a particular role.

Committee members were generally positive about the formal support they did receive. Committee members were most likely to receive informal advice and support from other committee members (58 percent), from ECE service staff (40 percent), and from an umbrella organisation (27 percent) (especially playcentre—44 percent).

Consultation

Most committee members had had contact with parents in the last year, although 11 percent had had no or little contact. The most common form of contact was informal discussion with parents who were also the committee member's friends (73 percent).

Formal community consultation was mainly through newsletters, and meetings. Kindergarten and kōhanga reo were more likely than other services to consult through meetings. Funding, policies, excursions, and property were the main areas of consultation. Most committee members did not know the percentage of parents who participated in community consultation, or did not answer our question about levels of participation. Playcentre committee members reported the highest levels of parents participating in community consultation and kindergartens reported the lowest levels. Playcentre committee members were also the most satisfied with their level of contact with parents.

Nineteen percent of services had consulted with a local Māori community in the last year. Kōhanga reo had had extensive consultation with local iwi, marae, hapū, community leaders, and Māori parents. Other services had mainly consulted with Māori parents. The most common topics of consultation were te reo Māori in the programme and inclusion of local history in the curriculum. Kōhanga reo were more likely to consult over all issues and curriculum.

Few services had consulted with other ethnic communities.

Only 10 percent of committee members thought there were issues around consultation, although 30 percent were unsure, suggesting some uncertainty about the roles of committees in community consultation. The main consultation issues identified were lack of connection to the community, uncertainty about how to consult, a view that the committee did not need to consult, and time pressures. The MOE requirements for consultation at service level specified in the *Revised Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices* are that management and educators “should ensure that communication and consultation with each other and with parents/guardians, whānau, hapu, iwi and local communities acknowledge and respect all parties’ values, needs and aspirations” (Ministry of Education, 1996b). It does not attribute a role to parent committees.

Major issues for committee members

Major issues identified as very important by most committee members varied according to service type:

- the quality of teachers/educators and the availability of teachers/educators for education and care services
- staff:child ratios and the quality of teachers for kindergartens
- volunteer workloads and retaining families for playcentres
- staff:child ratios, group size, and retaining families for kōhanga reo (small numbers).

Overall comments

There is clearly much goodwill and willingness amongst parents in ECE to contribute to the ECE service through voluntary work on parent committees. There were some variations according to service type in the roles that committee members undertook, the gains for committee members from their committee work, and the main things committee members would like to change about their role:

- Kindergarten committee members seem to have a restricted role that is mainly concerned with fundraising and organising working bees. It could be timely for kindergarten associations to consider the potential roles of parent committees and whether fundraising and organising working bees are the most productive, especially given that the substantial government funding increases and the Free ECE policy may have lessened the need for such activities.
- High levels of volunteer work for administration have been found to be a burden for playcentres in this study and several other studies. Perhaps a system of association-wide administrative support could relieve all playcentres in a locality of much of their administrative work.
- More of the kōhanga reo and education and care committee members had responsibility for staff employment, and each group wanted advice. Specifically, education and care committee members tended to want a clearer distinction between governance and management, and kōhanga reo office holders tended to want more knowledge/training and support from MOE and ERO.

Taken together, these findings suggest that it may be valuable to critically examine the roles of committee members in ECE and how these can be supported, not only in terms of the roles they play currently, but also the roles they could play in the future to help strengthen ECE services as sites for democratic participation and development of social and human capital.

9. Conclusion

The NZCER national surveys offer the opportunity to “take the pulse” of ECE. In late 2007, we found the sector largely in good heart, particularly in relation to teacher morale, and the introduction of Free ECE. Where there has been policy work that has changed resources for ECE services, parents, and teachers, we see some positive gains.

Teachers/educators enjoyed their work, and most were positive about the support they got to do their job, their opportunities for learning, and their treatment. Morale levels were very high—slightly higher than in 2003, and higher than for primary and secondary teachers.

This is the first published survey finding out about parent views of how they experience Free ECE. Overall, parents are highly positive about Free ECE. Most parents accessing Free ECE have made family savings, some considerable, and were seeing favourable impacts on their family finances. Some parents said Free ECE made a difference between their child attending ECE or not attending, others that the savings were put to use on extra enriching activities for their child, and others that they are paying off mortgages faster or opening KiwiSaver accounts. Parents value having greater choice as to how they spend their time.

ECE services are somewhat better off financially than they were in 2003, and more parents were finding ECE services to be affordable (though this survey was undertaken before the recent price rises in fuel and food). Both the Childcare Subsidy and accessing Free ECE are making ECE more affordable, as well as increased parental employment.

In regard to employment conditions, a marked improvement from 2003 occurred in teachers/educators’ access to paid noncontact time. This time is used by teachers to carry out processes such as planning, assessment, evaluation, and review that contribute to effective teaching and learning. Another improvement is in the raising of the base annual leave entitlement from three weeks to four weeks, in line with statutory change.

The continuing challenges

The main challenges for services and policy makers continue to be found in:

- meeting a diversity of parent needs at the local level, sometimes resulting in oversupply in some areas, and undersupply in others
- recruiting and retaining qualified staff.

Meeting a diversity of parent needs

Findings from this survey indicate that existing ECE provision has undergone a variety of changes, often in response to community need, but also because of Free ECE and funding system incentives. The most common changes have been in services increasing the hours they are open or opening for more sessions or on more days—changes that parents who participated in the NZCER 2003 national survey were looking for. Nevertheless, there is still some mismatch between the hours that ECE services are offering and the ECE services that are available, and the needs of families. Despite extensions to opening hours and sessions, a quarter of parents would still like their child to attend ECE for longer. ECE opening hours and costs remain barriers to extending ECE participation.

A minority of parents wanted to use ECE at different times than they were currently accessing. There appears to be a trend for somewhat more children to attend more than one ECE service at a time. In this survey, 24 percent of parents reported their child was using more than one ECE service. The main reasons are both in terms of the particular emphasis of each service, but also to access ECE at times that the parent needed.

The survey covered parents currently using ECE, and so will understate the national level of parents' needs for ECE.

The study found a shift from 2003 towards more parents participating in paid employment and fewer parents being involved in helping at the ECE service in 2007. It may be that the changes that services have made to their operation in the last two years before Free ECE (especially the increase in hours, days, and flexible provision) and the improvement in the affordability of ECE currently have affected the ability of parents to undertake paid employment. Other studies have shown that where funding systems affect ECE service operation, they may also influence parental employment and other activities. In Quebec, where subsidised full-day care was expanded, full-time maternal employment increased (Baker, Gruber, & Milligan, 2005).

Some ECE services, especially kindergartens, are reducing enrolments through becoming all-day services or offering longer sessions for fewer children. It is unclear whether new ECE provision is needed in the communities served by these ECE services to make up for fewer child spaces, or who is responsible for developing it.

Capacity issues

The emphasis on ECE and increased government support for it has resulted in increased rolls for around a third of the services, but steady declines for 12 percent, with about half of these services affected by new ECE services opening in their area, suggesting an oversupply in that area. Early education and care services and home-based networks seemed to have more ability to adapt than did kindergartens and playcentres. However, there were services of every type that were having some difficulties. Even with expansion of places and hours, there are some questionmarks about the ability of the ECE sector to cater for increased participation: most of the ECE services

catering for under two-year-olds had no spare places, and only a third of those catering for those two years and older had one or more spare places.

The provision of ECE for children under two has been increasing: in this survey, just over 60 percent of children had started ECE at this age.

The continuing issues around unmet parent needs and gaps in ECE provision raise questions about whether a comprehensive system of community planning could offer a more thorough and systematic approach to designing ECE service provision to address family and community needs and aspirations. An overview of a whole community is not possible in a system where individual services alone are responsible for planning and development.

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff

While there has been concerted policy and service attention paid to upgrading qualifications and recruiting new teachers with qualifications, there is still a large shortfall in the number of qualified ECE teachers available. Finding suitable and qualified teachers was harder for managers of education and care services.

Turnover rates also remain high. Employment conditions are one of the main reasons given by teachers for their moving on to other services: and this survey only included those who remained teaching, not those who had moved out of ECE teaching altogether.

High levels of teacher turnover can be detrimental for children's development, since children's wellbeing is supported by secure relationships with adults who know them well. High turnover can also erode the ECE service culture and capacity of staff to build on professional development experiences. Whitebrook and Sakai (2003) provide US evidence that high turnover is linked to poorer quality of education and care and may affect children's social-emotional and language development.

Other studies have found linkages between competition over pay and teacher turnover. Whitebrook and Sakai's (2003) study of childcare centre teaching staff and directors found that directors were more likely to leave if they earned lower wages. In another Canadian study (Doherty, Lero, Goelman, LaGrange, & Tougas, 2000), associations were found between teaching staff turnover rate and the average hourly wage of teaching staff. According to teachers in this current NZCER survey, better employment conditions rather than pay were more of a motivation to change their employment. This may be because in some localities, competition between services for qualified staff has narrowed some gaps between services in the pay they offer, and employers are also offering employment condition incentives to attract qualified teachers.

Variability in pay and employment conditions exists between ECE services. Overall, kindergarten teachers were better paid, had better leave conditions, were more likely to have an employer-subsidised superannuation scheme, and had more paid noncontact time than teachers/educators in other paid ECE positions. However, kindergarten teachers also reported more time spent on work outside of working hours. Kindergarten teachers' relatively poorer adult:child ratios and larger

numbers of children are likely to have affected their workload. The variability in pay and employment conditions for teachers outside the state sector kindergarten service seems to be symptomatic of an industrial framework that allows individual ECE services to negotiate pay and conditions for their own service. It is not a feature of kindergarten teachers' employment where a national collective employment agreement is negotiated centrally with the teachers' union, employer bodies, and the MOE.

The survey found some differences between the employment conditions of teachers/educators in private and community-based ECE services, favouring teachers/educators in community-based services. Overall, teachers/educators in community-based education and care centres had more days annual and sick leave, more frequent staff meetings, and were more likely to be part of the decision-making team with respect to planning for children's learning, communicating with parents about learning, curriculum resources, policy development and review, and assessment and evaluation. Differentials were also found between these groups in 2003 on these items except rates of pay and sick leave (which were not analysed in 2003). However, differentials found in 2003 with respect to paid noncontact time, workload, and morale were no longer present in 2007.

These findings raise questions about why such differentials exist. The private sector spans a range of services, some more focused on providing profits for owners and shareholders than others. Perhaps we should be debating whether it is in community interests to continue to allow the expansion of for-profit centres, most particularly corporate publicly listed childcare chains in New Zealand's education and care sector, where the need for profit may be occurring at the expense of the quality of the ECE service. As well, if employment conditions are left to the market, discrepancies between private and community-based teachers/educators' employment conditions are unlikely to be resolved, allowing a continuation of high turnover rates, which is likely to be to the disadvantage of children attending for-profit centres.

References

- Baker, M., Gruber, J., & Milligan, K. (2005). *Universal childcare, maternal labor supply and family wellbeing*. National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved 13 June 2006, from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11832>
- Burchinal, M. R., Roberts, J. E., Riggins Jr, R., Zeisel, S. A., Neebe, E., & Bryant, D. (2000). Relating quality of center-based child care to early cognitive and language development longitudinally. *Child Development, 71*(2), 339–357.
- Cameron, C., Owen, C., & Moss, P. (2001). *Entry, retention and loss: A study of childcare workers and students*. Norwich: Department for Education and Skills.
- Campbell, J. (2006, December 15). ABC acquires La Petite. *ExchangeEveryDay* Retrieved 18 December 2006, from ChildCareExchange.com
- Daycare Trust. (2004). *A new era for universal childcare?* London: Daycare Trust.
- Department of Labour and National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women. (1999). *Childcare, families and work. The New Zealand Childcare Survey 1998: A survey of ECE and care arrangements for children*. Wellington: Labour Market Policy Group.
- Doherty, G., Lero, D. S., Goelman, H., LaGrange, A., & Tougas, J. (2000). *A Canada-wide study on: Wages working conditions, and practices in child care centres*. Ontario: Centre for Families, Work, Well-Being, University of Guelph.
- Early Childhood Education Project. (1999). *Future Directions: ECE in New Zealand*. Wellington: Early Childhood Education Project
- Fraser, A. (2008). ABC directors dump \$52m in shares. *The Australian*. Available at www.theaustralian.news.com.au
- Lange, D. (1988). *Before Five—ECE and care in New Zealand*. Wellington: Department of Education.
- Ministry of Education and New Zealand Teachers Council. (2007). *Towards Full Registration: A support kit*. Ministry of Education and New Zealand Teachers Council: Wellington.
- Ministry of Education. (2005). *Kei Tua o te Pae. Assessment for learning: Early childhood exemplars*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (2004). *Governing and Managing Your Early Childhood Service*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (2002). *Pathways to the future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (2001). Early Childhood Equity Funding. *Education Circular, 2001/24* (16 November 2001).
- Ministry of Education. (1996). Revised Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPs) for Chartered Early Childhood Services in New Zealand. *The New Zealand Gazette, 3 October*.
- Mitchell, L. (2008a). *Early childhood education services in 2007: Key findings from the NZCER national survey*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Available at: www.nzcer.org.nz
- Mitchell, L. (2008b). *Assessment practices and aspects of curriculum in ECE. Results of the 2007 NZCER national survey of ECE services*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Mitchell, L. (2005). Policy shifts in early childhood education: Past lessons, new directions. In J. Codd & K. Sullivan (Eds.), *Education policy directions in Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 175–198). Southbank Vic: Thomson Learning.

- Mitchell, L. (2002). *Differences between community owned and privately owned early childhood education and care centres: A review of evidence*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Mitchell, L., & Brooking, K. (2007). *First NZCER national survey of ECE services*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Mitchell, L. & Hodgen, E. (forthcoming). *Locality-based evaluation of Pathways to the Future. Phase 1 report*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Mitchell, L., Royal Tangaere, A., Mara, D., & Wylie, C. (2006a). *An evaluation of initial uses and impact of Equity Funding*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Mitchell, L., Royal Tangaere, A., Mara, D., & Wylie, C. (2006b). *Quality in parent/whānau-led services*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Mitchell, L., Wylie, C., & Carr, M. (2008). *Outcomes of ECE: Literature review. Report to the Ministry of Education*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Nash, R., & Harker, R. (2005). The predictable failure of school marketisation: The limitations of policy reform. In J. Codd & K. Sullivan (Eds.), *Education policy directions in Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 201–218). Southbank Victoria: Thomson, Dunmore Press.
- NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (1999). Child outcomes when child care center classes meet recommended standards for quality. *American Journal of Public Health, 89*(7), 1072–1077.
- NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2002). Child-care structure>process>outcome: Direct and indirect effects of child-care quality on young children's development. *Psychological Science, 13*(3), 199–1077.
- NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2006). Child-care effect sizes for the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development. *American Psychologist, 61*(2), 99–116.
- Nuttall, J. (2003). Exploring the role of the teacher within Te Whāriki: Some possibilities and constraints. In J. Nuttall (Ed.), *Weaving Te Whāriki. Aotearoa New Zealand's early childhood curriculum document in theory and practice* (pp. 161–186). Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- OECD. (2001). *Starting strong. Early childhood education and care*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- Robertson, J. (2007). *Parental decision making in relation to the use of ECE services*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Whalley, M., & the Pen Green Centre Team. (2007). *Involving parents in their children's learning* (2nd ed.). London: Paul Chapman.
- Whitebrook, M., & Sakai, L. (2003). Turnover begets turnover: An examination of job and occupational instability among child care center staff. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 18*, 273–293.
- Working Group for the Development of the Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education. (2001). *Final report of the Working Group for the Development of the Strategic Plan for early Childhood Education*. Retrieved 13 February, 2006.

Appendix A: Characteristics of survey responses

Table 42 Characteristics of survey responses: Services from which one response received

	2007 Ministry ECE statistics %	2007 Sample ECE statistics %	2007 Returns %
Type			
Education and care	52	51	51
Kindergarten	16	16	22
Playcentre	12	12	18
Home-based	6	6	4
Kōhanga reo	13	12	5
Casual	1	< 1	–
Size			
Under 11	1	1	1
11–25	27	27	25
26–30	24	26	30
31 or more	48	44	44
Location			
Main urban	71	71	68
Secondary urban	6	5	6
Minor urban	12	12	13
Rural	11	11	13
Ownership			
Community-based	66	65	71
Privately owned	34	34	28
Equity index			
1	7	7	4
2	7	7	7
3	7	7	6
4	7	7	9
None	73	72	75
Isolation index			
Yes	19	18	17
No	81	80	83

Table 43 Characteristics of survey responses: Managers/head teachers

	2007 Ministry ECE statistics %	2007 Sample ECE statistics %	2007 Returns %
Type			
Education and care	52	51	41
Kindergarten	16	16	42
Playcentre	12	12	7
Home-based	6	6	3
Kōhanga reo	13	12	7
Casual	1	< 1	–
Size			
Under 11	1	1	–
11–25	27	27	20
26–30	24	26	24
31 or more	48	44	56
Location			
Main urban	71	71	74
Secondary urban	6	5	4
Minor urban	12	12	13
Rural	11	11	9
Ownership			
Community-based	66	65	72
Privately owned	34	34	27
Equity index			
1	7	7	7
2	7	7	6
3	7	7	8
4	7	7	13
None	73	72	66
Isolation index			
Yes	19	18	17
No	81	80	83

Table 44 Characteristics of survey responses: Parent committee

	2007 Ministry ECE statistics %	2007 Sample ECE statistics %	2007 Returns %
Type			
Education and care	52	51	33
Kindergarten	16	16	32
Playcentre	12	12	32
Home-based	6	6	–
Kōhanga reo	13	12	3
Casual	1	< 1	–
Size			
Under 11	1	1	1
11–25	27	27	25
26–30	24	26	34
31 or more	48	44	41
Location			
Main urban	71	71	58
Secondary urban	6	5	6
Minor urban	12	12	17
Rural	11	11	19
Ownership			
Community-based	66	65	100
Privately owned	34	34	0
Equity index			
1	7	7	2
2	7	7	4
3	7	7	7
4	7	7	13
None	73	72	71
Isolation index			
Yes	19	18	20
No	81	80	80

Note that the population and sample percentages include all private centres, but the sample responses are drawn almost exclusively from community-based centres.

Table 45 Characteristics of survey responses: Parents

	2007 Ministry ECE statistics %	2007 Sample ECE statistics %	2007 Returns %
Type			
Education and care	52	51	50
Kindergarten	16	16	22
Playcentre	12	12	18
Home-based	6	6	4
Kōhanga reo	13	12	6
Casual	1	< 1	–
Size			
Under 11	1	1	1
11–25	27	27	24
26–30	24	26	31
31 or more	48	44	44
Location			
Main urban	71	71	66
Secondary urban	6	5	6
Minor urban	12	12	14
Rural	11	11	14
Ownership			
Community-based	66	65	72
Privately owned	34	34	28
Equity index			
1	7	7	4
2	7	7	8
3	7	7	6
4	7	7	9
None	73	72	74
Isolation index			
Yes	19	18	17
No	81	80	82

Table 46 Characteristics of survey responses: Teachers/educators

	2007 Ministry ECE statistics %	2007 Sample ECE statistics %	2007 Returns %
Type			
Education and care	52	51	52
Kindergarten	16	16	26
Playcentre	12	12	16
Home-based	6	6	4
Kōhanga reo	13	12	2
Casual	1	< 1	–
Size			
Under 11	1	1	1
11–25	27	27	21
26–30	24	26	30
31 or more	48	44	48
Location			
Main urban	71	71	71
Secondary urban	6	5	6
Minor urban	12	12	14
Rural	11	11	9
Ownership			
Community-based	66	65	71
Privately owned	34	34	29
Equity index			
1	7	7	4
2	7	7	6
3	7	7	5
4	7	7	10
None	73	72	76
Isolation index			
Yes	19	18	14
No	81	80	86