Investigating Quality Learning Experiences in Parent and Whānau-Led Early Childhood Services

Background Report

Published June 2006

Linda Mitchell, Arapera Royal Tangaere, Margaret Whitford & Diane Mara

ISBN 0-478-13513-0
Acknowledgments

This research project Investigating Quality Learning Experiences, Learning Opportunities and Learning Outcomes in Parent and Whänau-led Early Childhood Education Services was funded by the Ministry of Education and we appreciate their support for this project.

The research was undertaken as a collaborative project by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) and Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust.

We would like to thank the members of the Advisory Group. Rocky Swinton, Fereni Ete, Latai Tu'ima, Robynn Kopua, Gillian Croad, Maureen Simpson, Maggie Haggerty, Anne Meade and Ministry of Education staff have willingly provided information and given constructive guidance for this project. We are also grateful to Anne Meade who interviewed international researchers known to have worked on projects related to parent-led services.

The NZCER researchers interviewed all key informants, including Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust representatives as key informants for kōhanga reo.

We particularly appreciate the time given by the key informants and their thoughtful responses to the interview questions. They expressed their views openly and provided a range of valuable information for this report.

Cathy Wylie, Chief Researcher, from the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, has been invaluable in her role as critical colleague for the project.
# Table of Contents

**Acknowledgments**

**Executive summary**

Government goals for children, parents, whänau and communities relevant to parent and whänau-led services

Goals and unique characteristics of parent and whänau-led services

Differences and similarities between parent and whänau-led services and teacher-led services

Outcomes

**Introduction**

Background

**Methodology**

Questions for the scoping phase

Literature search through NZCER library

Key informant interviews

Contact with researchers who have worked in parent-led services

**Government goals for children, parents, whänau and communities relevant to parent and whänau-led services**

Government goals

Perspectives of Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development officials on quality, leadership and external support

**Köhanga reo**

Kaupapa, history and operation

Key informant perspectives on köhanga reo

**Playcentre**

Philosophy, history and operation

Key informant perspectives on the goals and aspirations of playcentre

**Pacific Islands early childhood groups and licensed Pasifika early childhood services**

Philosophy, history and operation

Key informant perspectives on Pacific Islands early childhood groups

**Licence-exempt playgroups, ngä puna köhungahunga and community language playgroups**

Philosophy, history and operation

Key informant perspectives on playgroups
Differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services

Definitions
Differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services
Summary of differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led and teacher-led services

Interviews with UK researchers
Features of UK playgroups
Themes and issues

Conclusion
Characteristics of the operation of parent and whānau-led services
Differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led and teacher-led services
Outcomes of parent and whānau-led services
Representation of the framing conditions impacting on the learning environment for parent and whānau-led services.
Conditions that may hinder parent and whānau-led services from achieving outcomes

References

Tables

Table 1 Outcomes of parent and whānau-led services for children, parents and whānau/community
Table 2 Characteristics of the operation of parent and whānau-led early childhood services
Table 3 Differences and similarities and between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services
Table 4 Outcomes of parent and whānau-led services for children, parents and whānau/community

Figure

Figure 1 Framing conditions impacting on quality of learning environment for parent/whānau led services
## Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>Key informant interview questions: government officials</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive summary

This is a background report for the research project “Investigating quality learning experiences in parent and whānau-led early childhood education services”. The main purpose of the research was to find out more about the contributions parent and whānau-led early childhood education services are making to children’s learning, parent knowledge/skills and social support, and community, in order to provide the Ministry of Education and parent and whānau-led services with information that could be used to support quality in these services. Parent and whānau-led services are playcentres, kōhanga reo, Pasifika early childhood centres and groups, general playgroups, community language playgroups and puna.

The information described in this report was used to scope case study research in 2004 where we gathered data from a sample of 28 parent and whānau-led services to examine quality learning experiences, opportunities and outcomes in these early childhood services. This research is reported in:


This report draws on information about government goals relevant to parent and whānau-led services, service goals and aspirations, and differences between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services. We examined the nature of parent and whānau-led services – why parents and whānau participate, the range and nature of their involvement, provision of leadership, and the interactions occurring in parent and whānau-led services between the people involved in the service itself and other services and organisations. We examined outcomes being achieved in parent and whānau-led services.

The information was obtained through key informant interviews with Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development officials; representatives from Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust; New Zealand Playcentre Federation and three playcentre associations; Ministry of Education staff working with licence-exempt playgroups, ngā puna kōhungahunga, Pasifika early childhood groups and community language playgroups; and one ex-ECD staff member who had worked with these groups. There may be views about parent and whānau-led services that were not captured through the key informant interviews, information and literature, particularly in respect
to those licence-exempt services with no representative national organisation. We discussed some issues with a group of 13 playcentre professional development advisers. We gathered information that services had written about themselves and government policy statements. A literature review contributed some evidence, although there is very little research evidence about these service types. Finally we interviewed and collected research evidence from five researchers who have been involved in researching playgroups in the UK.

Government goals for children, parents, whānau and communities relevant to parent and whānau-led services

Government goals relevant to parent and whānau-led services are not confined to education goals. Relevant government goals are about education, labour market, community development, Māori development and Pasifika development.

Education goals, “All New Zealanders with strong learning foundations” (Ministry of Education, 2003), and strengthening family and community links, especially the engagement of families and community in education, are very relevant education goals. Parent and whānau-led services are valid forms of early childhood education provision. Good quality parent and whānau-led services contribute to educational goals for children and for the adults who undertake training and education to deliver the programme. Their basis in parent, whānau and community enables interrelationships to be strengthened.

One of the Ministry of Social Development’s goals is support for families and parenting: through participation in parent and whānau-led services, parents are supported in their role as parents and these services have the potential to become centres of community knowledge and expertise in raising young children. Parent and whānau-led services contribute to strengthening civil society by meeting their members’ needs, and providing opportunities for their members’ education and training and development of skills, and by members running the early childhood service and providing the educational programme.

Parent and whānau-led services contribute to labour market goals by providing opportunity for adults to build skills, and gain experience and confidence to participate in paid employment.

In addition to the goals that are relevant to all parent and whānau-led services, kōhanga reo and ngā puna kōhungahunga make strong contributions to goals for Māori development, cultural identity and revitalisation of te reo Māori.

Pasifika early childhood groups and community language groups contribute to goals in respect to cultural identity and language maintenance for their heritage communities, and Pasifika development.
Goals and unique characteristics of parent and whānau-led services

The philosophies and kaupapa, goals and aspirations of the diverse parent and whānau-led services are unique.

The kaupapa of kōhanga reo is reflected in the four pou, the cornerstones of the kaupapa: total immersion in te reo Māori in kōhanga reo daily operations; whānau decision making, management and responsibility; accountability; and health and well-being of the mokopuna and the whānau. Learning te reo, wanting their children to learn and ensuring the survival of te reo Māori are driving reasons for parents and whānau to participate and be involved in kōhanga reo. All involvement is welcomed. Ways are made to encourage participation – provision of vans, tuakana-teina whānau support for new whānau, and induction into the philosophy and values of kōhanga reo. The learning programme is based on Te Whāriki. The quality of cultural interactions among the kohanga whānau and mokopuna, the depth of relationships, the importance placed on quality interactions and the richness of te reo combine to provide learning experiences for children and whānau. Adults in kōhanga reo take responsibility for their own learning and all members are encouraged and supported to take leadership roles: children leading waiata and karakia, and kaiako and parents, with guidance from kaumatua, taking responsibility for their own and children’s learning. All generations will be seen in kōhanga reo. The kōhanga reo and Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust provide education and training.

Playcentre’s philosophy is to provide early childhood education emphasising a healthy and safe learning environment, child-initiated play, the importance of families as first educators and co-operative running of the playcentre. The playcentre movement provides education for parents/caregivers/whānau emphasising self-help and personal development. Playcentre parents and whānau remain as participants in playcentre because of the opportunity to be involved as their child’s first teacher, and the support for parents and families. Every family is required to have a minimum level of involvement in the programme. The learning programme is based on Te Whāriki and supported by good resources. A key to quality of programme is the provision by the playcentre movement of adult education opportunities and parent participation in training. Leadership is described as “emergent” with people being encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles.

Playgroups do not have a clearly articulated philosophy, but generally meet needs for socialisation and support. Ngā puna kōhungahunga have a philosophical basis in strengthening te reo and tikanga Māori. Pasifika early childhood groups and community language playgroups have a philosophical basis in strengthening their respective heritage languages and cultures. People participate in licence-exempt playgroups sometimes because they are the only option available, and sometimes because the cost is low, parents want socialisation opportunities for their child, parents want to be involved in their local community, be supported as parents, meet others and contribute to their child’s education. Learning te reo Māori is a main reason for participation in ngā puna kōhungahunga, and learning and using their heritage languages are reasons for
participation in Pacific Islands early childhood groups and community language groups. The programme and operation of licence-exempt services encourages socialisation of children and support for families. Ngā puna kōhungahunga, Pasifika early childhood groups and community language groups also provide total immersion or bilingual education in their heritage language. Some Aoga Amata, for example, use the Ta‘iala Samoan Language Curriculum document (1996) to guide them in their language teaching and learning.

**Differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services**

Defining characteristics of parent and whānau-led service are that parents and whānau attend with their children, and are responsible for providing the education programme and implementing the curriculum. In licensed parent and whānau-led services, parents and whānau undertake training and professional development. These characteristics are present in many kōhanga reo, playcentres and licence-exempt groups, and some Pasifika services.

There are key differences between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services in the following:

- **Training and qualifications.** The New Zealand Playcentre Federation and Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust provide their own training for parents and whānau leading to service specific qualifications. These qualifications are registered on the New Zealand Qualifications Authority Framework, but are currently not approved for teacher registration by the New Zealand Teachers Council. Licence-exempt playgroups do not provide training leading to a qualification.

  Teachers in kindergartens are required to be registered teachers, and there is a staged plan for all regulated staff in other teacher-led services to be registered teachers or for 70% to be registered teachers and up to 30% to be in training for a qualification approved for teacher registration by the New Zealand Teachers Council by 2012. Consideration is being given through the current regulatory review on how to include kaumatua and elders in teacher registration requirements.

- **Professional development.** Many parents and whānau in playcentres and kōhanga reo take up opportunities to participate in courses, workshops and wananga mainly provided through their umbrella organisations, but sometimes through external providers. Licence-exempt groups may encourage parents and whānau to attend courses/workshops/wananga. Professional development is variable for licence-exempt groups.

  Professional development opportunities are available for teachers in teacher-led services through providers contracted by the Ministry of Education or service-specific providers, such as senior teachers in kindergartens. Teacher-led services may also offer courses or workshops for parents and whānau relevant to the education programme or parenting.
• **Ratios.** Adult:child ratios are required to be higher than the regulated ratios in some parent and whānau-led services (ie. playcentres and licence-exempt groups).

• **Centre size.** Allowable centre size in playcentre is smaller than allowable centre size in other licensed services.

• **Leadership.** Playcentre emphasises emergent leadership, so that new people are supported to move into leadership roles. Leadership in kōhanga reo is undertaken by all members, including kaumatua, parents, whānau and children. Finding ways to encourage leadership to develop is especially important in parent and whānau-led services where there is turn-over of experienced members as children move on to school, and new members need to be brought on board to take on the considerable responsibilities.

• **Age groupings.** Parent and whānau-led services usually provide for babies, toddlers and young children and emphasise taking responsibility for support, caring and extending each other through tuakana-teina relationships. The age groupings in teacher-led service depend on the service’s licence.

There are similarities and differences amongst parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services reflecting differences in their ownership, operation and service type rather than whether they are parent and whānau-led or teacher-led.

• **Responsibility for the education programme.** Parents and whānau provide the education programme and implement the curriculum in playcentres and playgroups. Most of these parents and whānau are not paid as employees although some may receive a koha or honorarium.

In some parent and whānau-led services, teacher/kaiako/supervisors/co-ordinators are employed to work alongside parents and whānau. In many kōhanga reo and licensed Pasifika centres, paid kaiako/teachers provide the education programme and implement the curriculum.

Paid teacher/educators provide the education programme and implement the curriculum in teacher-led services. Pay rates vary.

• **Responsibility for governance and management.** There are differences between community-based education and care centres, kindergartens, parent and whānau-led services and privately owned education and care centres. In the former, parents and whānau are responsible for governance and management. In the latter the owner has this responsibility.

• **Fees and cost.** There are differences in fees payable according to whether the service is full day or sessional and the philosophy of the service. Most kindergartens do not charge fees, and sessional parent and whānau-led services do not charge fees or have low fee levels that are not compulsory. In full day services that employ paid staff, fees may be high to cover the costs of provision that are not met by other funding sources.
• Access to professional and management support. There are differences in access to professional and management support according to whether the service is affiliated to an umbrella organisation providing such support. Kōhanga reo, playcentre and kindergartens have access to their own service-specific umbrella organisations.

There are similarities and differences among parent and whānau-led and services and teacher-led services reflecting whether they are licensed and chartered or licence-exempt.

• Funding. Licensed and chartered services receive government bulk funding, and may be eligible for Equity Funding, discretionary grants and MSD childcare subsidies. Licence-exempt services receive limited government funding.

• Curriculum. Licensed and chartered services operate under the Education (Early Childhood Education) Regulations and follow the Desirable Objectives and Practices. They are required to plan, implement and evaluate the curriculum based on the principles, strands and goals of Te Whāriki.

Licence-exempt groups have minimal requirements for education programme provision, and health and safety. They are not required to follow the DOPs and do not base their programme on Te Whāriki.

• ERO reviews. Licensed services are subject to ERO reviews; licence-exempt services are not.

There are differences between all services according to their philosophy.

An issue identified through the regulatory review is whether to define parent and whānau-led services through their structure rather than their service type. This would provide clarification of what is meant by a parent and whānau-led service. Structure could include:

• professional and management support through an umbrella organisation, including support for emergent leadership;
• parents and whānau attending with their children;
• parents and whānau in combination holding approved qualifications;
• parents and whānau undertaking training and courses/workshops/wananga; and
• higher adult:child ratios than those regulated.

Outcomes

Potential outcomes from good quality parent and whānau-led services are presented in 3 major categories: outcomes for children, outcomes for parents and outcomes for whānau and community and are presented in the table below.
Table 1  Outcomes of parent and whānau-led services for children, parents and whānau/community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes for children</th>
<th>Outcomes for parents</th>
<th>Outcomes for whānau/community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions, and sense of identity.</td>
<td>Parenting skills and knowledge of child learning and development</td>
<td>Weaving people together and connecting them with relevant social and community networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills and knowledge through taking responsibility for service provision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowerment and enhanced self-esteem as an adult through being encouraged, affirmed and mentored to learn skills and develop understanding, and use these for the benefit of the service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich communication, sense of belonging and extended learning experiences through connectedness between home and parent and whānau-led service</td>
<td>Greater confidence in role as parents</td>
<td>Strengthening community and cultural identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater confidence in ability to learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents and whānau become advocates for their own and others’ children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn and understand te reo and tikanga Māori and develop a sense of cultural identity (kōhanga and puna)</td>
<td>Knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori, and a sense of cultural identity (kōhanga and puna)</td>
<td>Parent and whānau decision making, management and responsibility for providing a community facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn their heritage language and culture, and develop a sense of cultural identity (PIE CGs and community language groups)</td>
<td>Knowledge of heritage language and culture and a sense of cultural identity (PIE CGs and community language groups)</td>
<td>Strengthening te reo and tikanga Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have learning opportunities provided at home</td>
<td>Reducing cultural isolation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babies, toddlers and young children develop socialisation and caring skills by being educated together</td>
<td>A focal point in the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with special needs develop a sense of belonging through being welcomed and included in the service</td>
<td>Developing friendships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing to community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing to community development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Framing conditions impacting on the quality of learning environments are represented in Figure 1.
Figure 1 Framing conditions impacting on quality of learning environment for parent/whānau led services

External Framing Conditions and Social Cohesion

Pedagogical Framing
Te Whāriki
Reflective practice involving whole ece services community

Planning Assessment
Evaluation of programme
Arrangement of space
Equipment and materials
Premise
Tiakana-teina relationships
Development of behaviour routines for collaborative play
Use of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori
Use of Pacific language and culture
Whānau/parents knowledge of heritage, language and culture
Whānau/parents knowledge of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori
Whānau/parents knowledge of Pacific culture, language and values
Whānau/parents knowledge of children
Whānau/parents knowledge of pedagogy

Pedagogical Experiences
Face to face interactions
Ako

Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori, Pacific languages and cultures

Social support
Parents/whanau supporting each other and developing friendships
Collective responsibility for children
Responsibility for managing & running service
Access to specialist services

Development of behaviour routines for collaborative play
Use of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori
Use of Pacific language and culture
Whānau/parents knowledge of heritage, language and culture
Whānau/parents knowledge of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori
Whānau/parents knowledge of Pacific culture, language and values
Whānau/parents knowledge of children
Whānau/parents knowledge of pedagogy

Capability
Responsibility for managing & running service
Access to specialist services

Adult Education
• parenting
• pedagogical
• language
• attitudes
• skills
• knowledge

Societal valuing of parents and whānau

Relationship with schools, kura, health services, iwi, church orgs, ece services

Support from outside professionals
TRKN, ECD, Kaumatua, PC Association and Federation, community organisations

Societal valuing of parents and whānau as educators of their children

Philosophy, aspirations and values

NZCER and TKRNT
Conditions that may hinder parent and whānau-led services from achieving outcomes are:

- falling rolls and small size, making the services less viable financially and providing a limited number of people to volunteer and become leaders;
- turnover of leaders and educators, leaving few or no experienced leaders;
- levels of training and qualifications of parent educators. The take-up and quality of training, professional development and parent education is likely to impact on the quality of the educational programme;
- rurality and isolation, affecting access to professional and management support, resources, levels of transience, and access to specialist services;
- access to an infrastructure of professional, management and financial support, as is provided for kōhanga reo and playcentre.

The relationship between these conditions and potential outcomes that parent/whānau-led ECE services can contribute to was examined in the subsequent case study research.
Section One

Introduction

Parent and whānau-led services in Aotearoa New Zealand are kōhanga reo, playcentres, playgroups, ngā puna kōhungahunga (puna), Pasifika early childhood groups, and community language playgroups. This report provides background information on these parent and whānau-led early childhood services and relevant research evidence, using data gathered in 2004 to scope case study research examining quality learning experiences, opportunities and outcomes in these early childhood services. That research is available in summary form and as a technical report.

This report draws on information that parent and whānau-led services have written about their services, interviews with key informants representing, or knowledgeable about, these services, interviews with government officials, national and international research literature, and interviews with UK researchers researching in playgroups. We thought it would be useful to bring all the information together to provide the early childhood education sector with a fuller background picture than was published in the summary and technical research reports.

Background

In September 2002, the Labour-led government released a 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education (ECE) in Aotearoa New Zealand, Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki. The government’s vision for ECE in the future is for all New Zealand children to have the opportunity to participate in quality ECE, no matter what their circumstances. At the centre of the strategic plan are three goals:

a) to increase participation;

b) to improve quality; and

c) to promote collaborative relationships.


Within the broad goal of quality there is a strategy to support quality in ECE services provided by parents and whānau (parent and whānau-led services). The Ministry of Education views this research into quality in parent and whānau-led early childhood services as contributing to this strategy.

Parent and whānau-led services are not a uniform group: they have different philosophies and kaupapa. In this report we consider them separately, describing the philosophy, structures and operations of these services, and examining the responses of key informants to questions about quality in their own services. We report their perspectives on:

• goals and aspirations of their service;
• key differences and similarities between teacher-led and parent and whānau-led services;
• reasons for participation and the range and nature of parent and whānau involvement;
• views on quality interactions between adults and adults, adults and children, children and children, the service and other services;
• how leadership operates; and
• the outcomes achieved in their service.

The conclusion identifies outcomes for children, parents and whānau/community that the case study research investigated, and characteristics of parent and whānau-led services, including infrastructural support, that may assist these services to achieve and sustain good quality.
Section Two

Methodology

The research methods used for the scoping phase of this project involved:

• gathering together and reviewing information that parent and whānau-led services have written
  themselves, and literature and information (national and international) related to parent and
  whānau-led services;
• identifying and interviewing key informants representative of or knowledgeable about parent
  and whānau-led early childhood services;
• interviewing government officials whose work relates to parent and whānau-led services; and
• interviewing and discussing key issues with UK researchers who have undertaken work in
  parent-led services.

Questions for the scoping phase

The specific research questions that this report addresses are:

What are the goals and aspirations of the different parent/whānau-led services?

What are the government’s goals for children, parents and whānau/communities that are relevant
to parent/whānau-led services?

What are the key areas of difference between parent/whānau-led services and teacher-led
services? What are the areas of similarity?

Why do children, parents and whānau participate in parent/whānau-led services?

What interactions are occurring in parent/whānau-led services between:

• adults and adults;
• adults and children;
• children and children; and
• services (other ECE services, ECE bodies providing support such as Early Childhood
  Development, Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, playcentre associations or other agencies).

What is the range and nature of parental and whānau involvement both within and across
services?
Who provides leadership and how does it operate in respect to children’s learning, adults learning and the service?

What do we know about the outcomes being achieved in parent/whānau-led services?

This section of the report describes the methods used to gather information. Section Three describes government goals for parent and whānau-led services. Section Four describes characteristics of kōhanga reo and key informant perspectives. Sections Five, Six and Seven follow the same format for playcentre, Pasifika services and Pacific Islands early childhood groups, and licence-exempt playgroups, puna and community language groups respectively. Section Eight describes differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services. Section Nine describes the views on key issues of UK researchers who have researched UK playgroups.

The conclusion synthesises the information, comparing characteristics of the different parent and whānau-led services and comparing those services with teacher-led services. We identify and discuss outcomes that parent and whānau-led services are able to achieve, and factors that seem to hinder or support them.

**Literature search through NZCER library**

The NZCER library searched standard library databases in New Zealand and overseas. The search also included evidence that is not on databases but is held within universities and with providers of parent/whānau-led services. The search was an iterative process, done in consultation with the researchers.

These sources were used:

NZCER Library databases
ERIC (US) education database
Australian Education Index
British Education Index
INNZ (NZ articles)
Te Puna (New Zealand and worldwide monographs)
Dialog (including Education, Public Affairs, Government and Management databases)
Ingenta
British education index
ACER Education Research Theses database
ACER Database of Research on International Education

ACER Library Catalogue

Natasha Kuka from the Ministry of Education also supplied some valuable material. However, there was generally very little relevant research literature from which to draw. We have used all that was available.

**Key informant interviews**

Key informants were determined by the research team in consultation with the Ministry of Education and the project’s advisory group. There may be views about parent and whānau-led services that were not captured through the key informant interviews, information and literature, particularly in respect to those licence-exempt services with no representative national organisation.

Staff from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development who were knowledgeable about policy relevant to parent and whānau-led services were interviewed. We had an informal discussion with Education Review Office (ERO) staff but this was not reported because ERO was then engaged in drawing together evidence about parent and whānau-led services, which was published in 2004. NZCER undertook interviews with key informants from Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust and the New Zealand Playcentre Federation as the national organisations for kōhanga reo and playcentres respectively.

Members of the advisory group in consultation with the New Zealand Playcentre Federation helped us to select three playcentre associations which are the umbrella organisations for the playcentres in their geographic area. These three associations varied in respect to how they were structured. One association employs paid supervisors, one uses team supervision, and one rosters parents and caregivers from every family for the playcentre sessions.

There is no umbrella organisation covering licence-exempt groups. Therefore we interviewed key informants who were regional managers and early childhood co-ordinators from the former Early Childhood Development (now Ministry of Education) whose focus was to work with licence-exempt general playgroups, ngā puna kōhungahunga, Pasifika early childhood groups and community language playgroups.

We also interviewed a key informant from the Pasifika community who was working with a Pasifika licensed education and care centre.

We interviewed the following groups and individuals:

---

• a group interview of two national Ministry of Education staff;
• a group interview of two national Ministry of Social Development staff;
• an individual interview with a Te Kōhanga National Trust staff member;
• an individual interview with a former Early Childhood Development (ECD) regional manager;
• an individual interview with a national Ministry of Education staff member from the former ECD who worked with ngā puna kōhungahunga;
• two individual interviews with regional Ministry of Education staff from the former ECD who work with Pasifika early childhood groups, community language playgroups and general playgroups;
• an individual interview with an educator from a licensed Pasifika education and care centre;
• an individual interview with one representative from the New Zealand Playcentre Federation;
• a group interview with two representatives from the New Zealand Playcentre Federation;
• two individual interviews with a representative from two different playcentre associations;
• a group interview with four representatives from a playcentre association.

A presentation about this research project was made to a group of 13 playcentre parents who were professional development facilitators. This was followed by small group discussions on aspects of the questions. Each group provided written feedback.

Key informant interviews with Ministry of Education officials at a policy level, gathering of government policy statements on goals for children, parents, whänau and communities, and analysing their relevance to parent and whänau-led services form one aspect of this report. Other parts of the key informant interviews addressed questions about goals and aspirations, reasons for participation in the services, interactions and support provided for these services, and views of the range and nature of parent/whänau involvement, leadership, and outcomes. We also discussed the views of key informants about the interactions occurring in parent and whänau-led services. Key informant interview questions are in Appendix 1. Interview questions for government officials are in Appendix 2.

Contact with researchers who have worked in parent-led services

Anne Meade interviewed and collected research evidence from some UK researchers who have done research in parent-led ECE services in the United Kingdom.

Professor Chris Pascal, CREC, Birmingham, works on the Effective Early Learning project. This project developed a strategy to support teachers in implementing a programme of evaluation and improvement for children aged birth to 8 years and evaluated and compared the quality of early childhood education in diverse settings in the UK, including parent-led services (voluntary playgroups and pre-school playgroups).
Ann Mooney, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, London University, did research on UK playgroups in the mid 1990s.

June Stratham, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, London University reviewed playgroups in Wales in 2000 (with Pat Davies and Monica Carroll).

Geva Blenkin, Goldsmiths University, London. The Principles into Practice Project ran for 5 years. It included 30-40 playgroups from seven Local Education Authorities. Each had a researcher/research assistant for their participatory action research. These researchers were teachers.

Rosie Roberts, former Director of Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP), Oxford. PEEP aims to raise educational attainment, especially literacy, by supporting parents and caregivers as first educators. PEEP provides video and audio tapes, group sessions and home visits to parents and caregivers, and a structured curriculum based on areas such as “listening”, “talking”, “numeracy” and “self esteem”. Parents are given a folder with suggestions of home activities and can borrow books and activity packs.
Section Three

Government goals for children, parents, whānau and communities relevant to parent and whānau-led services

Government goals

Six government goals relevant to this research project are:

- growing an inclusive, innovative economy for the benefit of all;
- improving New Zealanders' skills;
- reducing inequalities in health, education, employment and housing;
- strengthening national identity and upholding the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi;
- maintaining trust in government and providing strong social services; and
- protecting and enhancing the environment.

Outcomes generated by these goals are found in the Statements of Intent from the Ministries of Education and Social Development.

Ministry of Education

According to the Ministry of Education's *Statement of Intent* (2003, p. 27)

> Many of the fundamental aspects of our education are sound. We are performing well comparatively across a number of important education measures including overall participation in early childhood.

This Ministry has identified four key outcomes to match the government's wider goals:

- all New Zealanders with strong learning foundations;
- high levels of achievement by all school leavers;
- all New Zealanders engaged in learning throughout their lives and developing a highly skilled workforce; and
- education making a strong contribution to our knowledge-base, especially in key areas of national development.
Pathways to the future – Ngā huarahi arataki sets out the government’s strategic plan for early childhood education until 2012. The plan acknowledges the importance of a child’s learning in the early years and the significant contribution that quality early childhood education can offer.

The plan has its basis in consultation with the sector. Three principles emerge from government statements and policy initiatives associated with the plan. These are that:

1. Early childhood education is a cornerstone of the education system. Minister of Education, Trevor Mallard’s statement in the Foreword to Pathways to the Future sets out the government’s vision

   . . . for all New Zealand children to have the opportunity to participate in quality early childhood education, no matter their circumstances. . . . If we are to build a strong future for this country, I believe we must firmly establish early childhood education as the cornerstone of our education system. Our social, educational and economic health can only benefit from efforts and resources focused on young New Zealanders. We cannot leave to chance the quality and accessibility of early childhood education.

2. Broad goals of education include learning and wellbeing, labour market goals, language and cultural goals, and support for families in their parenting roles. The 10 year strategic plan places emphasis on “a better co-ordinated range of education support services to young children, parents, families and whānau and opportunities for communities of learners to develop” (Crown 2002, p. 3). Its emphasis on integrated and comprehensive programmes is detailed in its goal to “promote collaborative relationships”.

3. The government wants to work in partnership with the sector to provide high quality education. It intends to “continue the partnership (with the ECE sector) building on the joint vision for the future direction of ECE in New Zealand” (Crown, 2002, p.19)

The plan covers three inter-related goals:
- improve quality of services;
- increase participation in quality early childhood education services; and
- promote collaborative relationships.

A network of interconnecting strategies intended to be carried out over time supports the three goals. Four broader “supporting strategies” underpin these: to review regulations, review the funding system, undertake ongoing research, and involve the sector in ongoing policy development and implementation. This research study to investigate quality in parent and whānau-led services was an action proposed in the strategic plan under the goal “Promoting collaborative relationships”.

These strategic plan policies and goals provide high level framing conditions for parent and whānau-led services within the education sector. A feature is the acknowledgement of the importance of parents and whānau within the early childhood education sector and the opportunity for “greater empowerment of parents and whānau to be involved in their children’s early
learning” (Crown, 2002, p. 6). The plan “recognises the value of licence-exempt and provides a genuine role for these groups within the sector” (Crown, 2002, p. 4).

Ministry of Education officials highlighted 3 government goals that are especially relevant to parent and whānau-led services. The first is the goal “All New Zealanders with strong learning foundations” (Statement of Intent). They noted the “strong learning foundations” goal can be applied to adults as well as children, for example to adults who “might not have had great experiences at school”. Parent and whānau-led services may play a role in offering such support.

The second relevant government goal is the goal of strengthening the engagement of families and community in education (Participation and Collaborative relationships goals, Strategic plan). There is a shift within the Ministry of Education from “a focus on providers, such as licensed centres, as a point of intervention, to a focus on families and communities”. The shift is evident, for example, in the Ministry’s employment of pouwhakataki. The incorporation of ECD into the Ministry of Education and the establishment of a new position of Manager, Families and Communities, has put a priority on families and community. Initiatives, such as the Promoting Participation Project, are working with communities to develop solutions to participation and meet needs of families and communities.

These officials said that government goals, particularly for playgroups, have changed in the last few years. Where in the past, playgroups were often treated as early childhood services “in waiting” to becoming licensed and chartered centres, now they are acknowledged as a valid form of early childhood provision in their own right, and are represented as such within government policy frameworks and actions.

They noted the relevance of Ministry of Social Development and Te Puni Kokiri goals to parent and whānau-led services:

- the goal from the Ministry of Social Development’s Statement of Intent for “stronger families and communities”;
- Te Puni Kokiri’s broad focus on wanting whānau, hapu, iwi structures and Māori communities and organisations to reach their aspirations for themselves. The Ministry of Education officials said the Ministry has greater acceptance now of the role of kōhanga reo in respect to whānau development, as well as its role as an education service. “We are recognising these multiple goals which are not just about education”.

The third relevant government goal for parent and whānau-led services is labour market participation. Parent and whānau-led services may contribute to this goal by “building capacity and capability”. Involvement in parent and whānau-led services may strengthen parents for participating in the labour market. A policy question is whether the government should invest in parent support and development, or whether it should reinforce existing services where parent support and development is already occurring.
Ministry of Social Development

The Ministry of Social Development’s strategic directions relevant to this research project are to:

- support families and parenting;
- provide strong child, youth and family services;
- support the community and volunteer sector; and
- ensure high quality social policy and research.

Within their *Statement of Intent* (2003, p. 35), the Ministry of Social Development highlights the contribution of early childhood experiences to later development and wellbeing.

Research evidence indicates that good adult outcomes are built on positive childhood experiences. Poor child outcomes can be difficult to overcome as children become adults.

They reinforce the importance of positive childhood experience:

*A happy childhood is a strong foundation for a positive future.*

Ministry of Social Development officials highlighted four government goals as being especially relevant to parent and whānau-led services.

The first goal, made clear in the Ministry of Social Development’s briefing to the Incoming Government is the value “of investing in the good development of young children”, which officials regarded as in the child’s interests at the time and having benefits later on when the child is an adult. The quality of what is delivered in terms of the curriculum is a “key factor in the quality of our commitment to children”.

The second relevant goal is to reduce barriers to participation in the paid workforce for those with childcare responsibilities. They said that being on a benefit long term and having low income has “not such good” outcomes for the adults and the children, “so moving people into paid work is a good thing”.

The third goal, is for early childhood education services to provide a setting for broader support for parents, where parents might share experiences about bringing up children, gain knowledge about child development, and gain skills in behaviour management such as “setting boundaries for toddlers”. Seeing their own child in relation to other children and how other parents react is a way this can occur. The Ministry of Social Development is very interested in the role that early childhood services can play in this respect.

We’ve been encouraged by some of the discussions (of the early childhood education strategic plan). . . about the potential for early childhood centres to become centres of community knowledge and expertise in raising young children.

The officials regarded parent and whānau-led services as providing a choice so that people could select the service that suited their aspirations and circumstances. “Social connectedness is really important so that families can relate to a particular group of people and then be connected in.” There are a variety of possible outcomes for parents from involvement in parent and whānau-led
services, such as increased capacity through participating as a volunteer, and social and personal development.

The fourth government goal is about strengthening civil society, to which parents and whānau-led services make a contribution.

(Parant and whānau-led services) are part of . . . civil society, where voluntary associations and organisations to meet their members’ needs are given emphasis, and where they see an opportunity for people to use their skills and extend them.

Ministry of Social Development officials noted that engagement of parents and volunteers in running early childhood education services is not exclusive to parent and whānau-led services. Community-based education and care centres and kindergartens have “a heavy engagement of parents taking quite a level of responsibility”, including employment of staff in community education and care centres.

**Perspectives of Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development officials on quality, leadership and external support**

**Quality**

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development officials had similar views that a good quality parent and whānau-led service would be positive for children’s learning. The Ministry of Education officials were specific about what that could mean in practice:

- understanding of child development and learning;
- good adult interactions with other adults, and with children, adults scaffolding learning, co-constructing knowledge, allowing play to continue its course and not take it over;
- parents reflecting on their practice (similar to teachers in teacher-led services); and
- focusing on children’s learning. It can happen in parent and whānau-led services that parents are too busy socialising and supporting each other to interact much with the children;
- adults having clarity about their roles; and
- parents modelling good practice, and discussing and supporting each other in respect to parenting.

They noted that the delivery of the curriculum is “probably stronger where teachers are present because they obviously train”. In playgroups, which get less intensive support than other parent and whānau-led services, “the level of curriculum is obviously lower”.

Ministry of Social Development officials would expect parent and whānau-led services to have good relationships with government and non-governmental organisation child and family organisations, and have established referral protocols with respect to child abuse or other things they are concerned about, processes worked out in relation to transition to school, and referral
protocols for health organisations. They saw referral protocols for child abuse to be CYFS’s responsibility, but other protocols and processes to be worked out by the parent and whānau-led service itself.

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development officials had somewhat differing views on whether there should be restrictions on who should work with children in parent and whānau-led services.

Ministry of Education officials expected there to be safe environments for children, but thought parent and whānau-led services tend to be self-regulating with respect to safety, because parents are making a choice to be there. There was also a view that “the government tends to take a back seat when parents are involved with their own children”.

Ministry of Social Development officials thought there should be checks (about child abuse, sexual offending, violence etc) on people who are going to have some supervision of children when parents are not there.

If an organisation sets itself up to carry out some of the roles that we expect parents to carry out for 0–5 year-olds, then it should be expected to take some responsibility for having some knowledge within that organisation about child abuse, safety and security.

They thought there was a fine line between a family and whānau service and one that goes beyond family and whānau in its responsibilities for children.

At some point if they start taking in the neighbours’ children and then children from the next block, that seems to me to pass over some line into providing a service rather than just pooling a few family resources.

They would expect there to be “someone in there who’s got some expertise about child development and about children’s learning”, about what is age appropriate, expectations in terms of behaviour and children’s learning. They thought collective responsibility for the quality of service that is provided is particularly necessary because of the vulnerability of young children. There should be some sort of check on quality.

Leadership

We asked officials who provides leadership in respect to parent and whānau-led services. Ministry of Education officials noted that in respect to children’s learning, there is a shift in some services towards employing a trained professional to work alongside parents. This may be attributable to societal change and people wanting to do things for themselves. In others, there may be a core of people with a high level of commitment who are involved and taking on training.

“Structural leadership” is provided by playcentre associations and the NewZealand Playcentre Federation for playcentres, and by Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust for kōhanga reo. Some educational leadership comes from there as well. They play a vital role with respect to adult training. Kaumatua are leaders in kōhanga reo.
“Structural leadership” for playgroups is variable.

**External support**

Ministry of Social Development officials thought external support is needed for parent and whānau-led services to provide knowledge of child development and children’s learning processes.

Ministry of Education officials noted two particular aspects of parent and whānau-led services that they thought could be improved and where support would help:

- the quality of language in immersion services, particularly in Māori immersion services, because many Pacific Islands families are fluent speakers of their heritage language. Deep conversations with children depended on fluency in the language.
- support for the curriculum, through training, access to professionals, better resources and information.
Section Four

Köhanga reo

Kaupapa, history and operation

“Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Mäori”

The Language is the Life force of Mäori mana” (Sir James Henare)

Te Köhanga Reo movement was born from the strategies of the “Tu Tangata” programme established by the Department of Mäori Affairs in 1977. The aim of this programme was “to establish Mäori cultural values and have them recognised within the institutional framework of New Zealand society” (Government review team, 1988:17).

At a Kaumatua Hui, 1979, held at Waiwhetu marae and organised by the Department of Mäori Affairs, te reo Mäori was identified as being the key to Mäori mana. At the Wänanga Whakatauira the following year it was agreed that Mäori should take control of ensuring the survival of the Mäori language and that the Department of Mäori Affairs place this as its top priority. The concept of Te Köhanga Reo was born. The first köhanga reo was opened on 13 April 1982 at Pukeatua, Wainuiomata.

Te Köhanga Reo means language nest. It focused on embracing young children under 5 years of age and their whänau to participate in a total immersion te reo and tikanga Mäori environment “with the aim of passing on the Mäori way of life to future generations” (ibid: 19). The responsibility of the revitalisation of the language became the responsibility of the people and their enthusiasm was reflected in the rapid number of köhanga reo established in the first year. By December 1982 there were 50 köhanga reo with many more being developed by iwi throughout New Zealand.

By December 1983, 170 köhanga reo were operating with another hundred köhanga being established each year until 1987, when there were 512 köhanga. The growth of the movement peaked in 1994 with 819 köhanga reo. There has been a slow decline since due to various factors, one of the main ones being the decrease in resource people fluent in te reo Mäori. As at July 2003, there were 526 licensed köhanga reo operating with 10,319 children enrolled. Over a quarter (28%) of köhanga reo (160) are in rural locations, and 99 (18%) are in minor urban locations. Many of these rural köhanga reo are based on marae. For köhanga reo the country is divided into
12 rohe or districts. These districts are determined by iwi boundaries although there are some kōhanga reo which may overlap two districts.

There are 15 licence-exempt kōhanga reo. Twelve of these kōhanga reo are working towards licensing and 3 are choosing to remain as licence-exempt. All kōhanga reo have chartered to Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust and operate 5 days a week. The majority of the care and supervision is provided by the parents or extended whānau of the children. Some of these kōhanga reo may pay the wages of the kaiako but the majority of the kaimahi are whānau and work voluntarily. The whānau are expected to enrol on the kōhanga specific training programmes and to attend purapura hui and wananga. These kōhanga reo are not required to comply with the regulations although the National Trust would expect them to ensure a safe and stimulating environment for the mokopuna. The time period for these kōhanga reo to become licensed from chartering can range from 1 to 3 years depending on the state of the building, availability of a fluent kaiako and "chipping away" at all the compliance requirements.

The Kaupapa of Te Kōhanga Reo

“E whakaatu ana i te mana o te whānau
E pupu ake ai te mana, te ihi, te wehi o te Māori”

The guiding principles of the movement are found in Te Korowai (1995), the Charter Agreement between the Kōhanga Reo National Trust on behalf of the individual kōhanga, and the Ministry of Education. This agreement was signed on 2 October 1995.

These principles are:

1. It is the right of the Māori child to enjoy learning the Māori language within the bosom of the whānau.

2. It is the right of the whānau to nurture and care for the mokopuna.

3. It is the obligation of the hapu to ensure that the whānau is strengthened to carry out its responsibilities.

4. It is the obligation of the iwi to advocate, negotiate and resource the hapu and whānau.

5. It is the obligation of the Government under Te Tiriti o Waitangi to fulfil the aspirations of the Māori people for its future generations.

Tino Rangatiratanga, a fundamental principle of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is the foundation of the movement.

Also embodied in Te Korowai are four ‘pou’ or posts, which are the cornerstones to the kaupapa. These four ‘pou’ are the kaupapa of te kōhanga reo.

**Total immersion in te reo Māori in te kōhanga reo daily operations**

- Speaking te reo Māori only in te kōhanga reo – No compromise.
Parents can learn with their children.

Kaumatua are comfortable in te kōhanga reo and have a valuable role in supporting the whānau workers.

Te reo Māori was the fundamental reason for establishment of te kōhanga reo.

In many respects it is the only opportunity for mokopuna to fix te reo Māori early in their lives.

Te reo Māori only in te kōhanga reo extends to an understanding of wairua, tikanga and ahuatanga Māori.

Whānau decision making, management and responsibility

- ensures everyone is involved in the running of a kōhanga reo, covering for instance the Charter, employment of whānau workers, salaries, buildings, transport, hours of operation, mokopuna and Te Whāriki (mokopuna learning programme);
- ensures sharing the workload
- ensures everyone is learning about te kōhanga reo;
- enables gaining greater understanding;
- leaves little opportunity to blame anyone or others if things go wrong;
- avoids domination of a few over the majority of the whānau; and
- provides a happy environment for all concerned.

Accountability

- Accountability to our creator
- Accountability to our ancestors
- Accountability to our whānau, hapu, iwi
- Accountability to ourselves, each other
- Accountability to the mokopuna
- Accountability to the movement
- Accountability to Government

Health and wellbeing of the mokopuna and the whānau

- ensures the mokopuna understand early in life that smoking endangers and is harmful to life;
- can increase adult realisation of harmful effects of smoking;
- can protect non-smokers;
- can lead to an increased understanding of health concerns such as diabetes, obesity, poor eating and nutritional habits, heart conditions, and deafness; and
- indicates that we are prepared to address such concerns.

Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust Board

The Kōhanga Reo National Trust is the parent body for all kōhanga reo in New Zealand. It was set up as a charitable trust in 1983. As the umbrella (whakaruruhau) organisation for te kōhanga
Köhanga reo it has a Charter Agreement with the Ministry of Education and a Tripartite Agreement with Te Puni Kokiri and the Ministry of Education.

Te Köhanga Reo National Trust is the national organisation, which sets policies, oversees, supports, advocates for and monitors the kaupapa of te köhanga reo. Its main role is to ensure the survival of te reo Māori, tikanga Māori and āhuatanga Māori through the strengthening of the entire whānau. It carries out this role under the stewardship of the Board, who are the kaitiaki of the kaupapa.

All köhanga reo charter to the National Trust using Te Korowai as the guiding framework and are issued with a Tutohinga (Charter) which indicates the commitment of the whānau to uphold the survival of te reo and tikanga Māori as a collective group. The köhanga whānau then decide whether or not to license with the Ministry of Education.

The chartering process enables whānau to work through the meaning of the kaupapa or four ‘pou’ to them as individuals and as a group. It allows the whānau to take ownership of the kaupapa for their children and design policies and practices according to these ‘pou’. The expectations for the whānau are that their children will learn te reo and tikanga Māori through immersion, that the whānau are committed to lifelong learning and that the answers are within themselves. The ingredient to ensure a quality köhanga reo according to tikanga is based on the cultural interactions that should permeate through the köhanga. This is ‘whakawhanaungatanga’.

**Operation of Köhanga Reo**

Köhanga reo cater for children from birth to 5 years of age. The köhanga are open a minimum of 6 hours a day, 5 days a week. Many köhanga reo especially in the cities may operate from 7:30am through to 5:30pm. Some köhanga reo are only open during the school term while others may be open 52 weeks of the year. The hours of operation are decided by the köhanga whānau themselves and this allows the köhanga to meet the needs of their whānau and community.

All kaiako in köhanga reo are attested by their whānau as to their competency in te reo Māori, as well as their suitability to work with the children. They are also expected to have a first aid certificate. The certificate for attestation is an essential part of the licensing process. Kaiako are also expected to either have the Tohu Whakapakari or be enrolled in the Whakapakari training programme. The Whakapakari Training Programme is a 3-year course for kaiako focusing on traditional Māori child rearing practices, Māori pedagogy of learning and teaching, Māori assessment processes, whanaungatanga (inter-relationships), whaioranga (health) and of course te reo and tikanga Māori.

An important component of the köhanga reo operation is the involvement of the extended whānau. This involvement is mainly voluntary where each person is valued as an important contributor to the kaupapa. It is not uncommon for köhanga to have kaumatua, kaiako, parents, older siblings, aunties and uncles participating. The suggested köhanga reo adult to child ratio is:

- under 2 years 1:3;
• over 2 years 1:6.

Often these ratios are even better in practice, especially when young parents are encouraged to stay with their under two-year-old and in general, when parents are free to participate with the mokopuna. In the larger city areas some kōhanga reo find that parents are not able to participate in the daily programme but will become involved through other activities.

Each kōhanga reo is managed by the kōhanga whānau. The parents are the employers, owners, users or stakeholders, and they are responsible for ensuring that their kōhanga meets all requirements, both kaupapa and legislative. Monthly whānau meetings are held to discuss the progress and general state of the kōhanga. This is where the decisions are made. Each kōhanga whānau elect office bearers on behalf of the whānau and working groups are established to address specific areas of operation such as the curriculum, property, personnel, finances and training. The licensee is also appointed on behalf of the whānau. Whānau decide the amount of whānau contribution to their kōhanga as well as the wages of their employees. These decisions are dependent on their budget.

The main aim of the kōhanga is to ensure that there are no barriers to children participating in the kōhanga as the ultimate outcome is have a critical mass of mokopuna competent in speaking te reo. If there is an issue with children getting to and from the kōhanga then car pooling or purchasing a van may be the solution. If parents are feeling inadequate because they cannot speak te reo then classes are established or parents are encouraged to enrol on a kōhanga language course. If parents cannot afford to pay then other means of contribution may be sought.

As well as whānau supporting one another there are also clusters of kōhanga reo which group together to share ideas, resources and wananga. These clusters are called purapura and the kōhanga often meet monthly to share and support. The kōhanga whānau also have access to the National Trust, their parent body, either directly through e-mail or phone, or to the kaupapa kaimahi and employee of the Trust who is based in the district.

Kōhanga whānau induct new whānau into the kaupapa of kōhanga reo ensuring that they understand their commitment to their children, their kōhanga whānau, the survival of the reo and the management of their kōhanga. Information and knowledge is passed on from whānau member to whānau member and in some cases the kōhanga have older members supporting the newer members in the complexities of operating a small business as well as the complexities of doing this within a kaupapa Māori framework.

Whānau Based Learning
There are two types of “training” in the movement. These are the programmes that are NZQA approved and accredited and the wananga or “professional development” courses.

There are three NZQA approved courses.
Te Ara Tuatahi: This one-year certificate course has been available since 1996 for the kōhanga whānau who speak very little Māori language or none at all. Components of the course include child development and management.

Te Ara Tuara: This is a one-year introductory course for staff who are semi-fluent, to improve their Māori language skills. Each unit in the course is introduced as preparation for the three-year diploma course.

Whakapakari Tino Rangatiratanga: This three-year course focuses on training teachers in the kōhanga to work alongside young children, the parents, other whānau members, and the community. It demands a high level of competency in Māori language and has a strong emphasis on research skills.

Currently there are over 1,200 akonga (students) enrolled on these programmes.

Wananga

The wananga are organised either by the kōhanga whānau, the purapura or the National Trust.

Wananga and hui are based around the whānau. This is to ensure that wananga for the whānau and particularly the parents, are accessible. Whānau may decide to organise a wananga at their kōhanga, purapura or district. These wananga are often organised in conjunction with their kaupapa kaimahi and the National Trust. Many of the topics are based on learning new skills to better manage their kōhanga. These can range from Te Whariki (curriculum), budget and finance, personnel requirements, maintenance, learning te reo, and many others.

The National Trust also organises regular wananga under the Ministry of Education ‘Whakapiki te reo’ policy. These ‘kura reo’ are well attended. They are held 2–3 times a year in seven areas. Some of the smaller districts are clustered together. Up to 200 people can attend at one time. The focus is on strengthening te reo. Since the year 2000 when the ‘kura reo’ programme started, the National Trust has been focusing on building the capacity of te reo in the kōhanga whānau, the hapu and the iwi. All kōhanga reo are expected to send staff and/or whānau to these wananga.

Te Whāriki

Te Whāriki defines learning outcomes for kōhanga reo. Part of Te Whāriki sets out the ways in which the principles and strands will be put into practice in ngā kōhanga reo.

In 1991, Dr Tāmati Reedy and Mrs Tilly Reedy began work on the Māori section of Te Whāriki for Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust. When the final version of Te Whāriki was published by the Ministry of Education, in June 1996, the whole document was based on the philosophical framework they had developed.

All kōhanga reo plan, implement, assess and evaluate their curriculum based on Te Whariki. Although the early childhood services and Te Kōhanga Reo design their programme based on Te Whariki the kōhanga model emphasises the importance of strong spiritual and cultural wellbeing

The whakapapa or genealogy of the child and whänau are important in learning who they are and where they are from. Hohepa, 1990; Ka’ai 1990; Royal Tangaere, 1992; White, 1994 stated the importance of the mihimihi sessions in their research for their masters degrees. These mihimihi sessions reinforced appropriate cultural practises and strengthened the child’s understanding of mana atua, mana whenua, mana tangata, mana reo and mana aoturoa.

Key informant perspectives on köhanga reo

Goals and aspirations

The main goal of köhanga reo is to revitalise te reo and tikanga Mäori in culturally appropriate ways. Survival of the language is the top priority. "Ko te reo te mauri te mana Mäori. The language is the life principle of mana Mäori" (cited in Te Korowai, 1995, p. 6). The child is central to köhanga reo philosophy and kaumätua are essential to the teaching and learning of the language.

We need to start with our very young. Place our young children with elders and kaumätua, make it like a nest.”

For the köhanga reo movement, the focus on whänau development is an integral part of the survival, retention and revitalisation of the Mäori language, Mäori traditions and values, and Mäori pedagogical practises or “whakawhanaungatanga”. Te reo is the vehicle for this development. The language is also the vehicle that drives children’s learning and development and binds parents, elders and the wider Mäori community to the movement. The valuing of the role that parents, whänau and community play is an important philosophy of köhanga reo. Their inclusion in the learning and development of children, support for learning and development of one another and the responsibility they take for decision-making, management, accountability and the shared workload are all important roles in köhanga reo.

Another key policy in köhanga reo kaupapa is that no smoking is tolerated in köhanga reo. This policy is extended into raising awareness of whänau health issues especially those related to smoking, diabetes, obesity, heart disease and nutrition.

Key areas of difference and similarity between köhanga reo and teacher-led services

The main areas of difference between köhanga reo and teacher-led services were identified as:

- the strong focus on the learning and speaking of te reo Mäori "language must be spoken to survive" (cited in Te Korowai, 1995, p. 18);
- the participation and involvement of whänau who are responsible for "running the köhanga, teaching the reo and decision-making";
• the concept of wairua, the spiritual connection to "caring for others and creating firm relationships through developing a sense of wellbeing" (Te Korowai, 1995, p. 18); and
• the view that "Te Köhanga Reo is for life" (Te Korowai, 1995, p. 17). Learning is lifelong.

The key similarity between köhanga reo and teacher-led services relates to the importance of the quality of communication and interactions between adults and adults, adults and children and, children and children. There is also a similarity in curriculum provision. Te Whāriki is a bicultural curriculum that underpins early childhood education provision in Aotearoa New Zealand. It integrates the care and education of children from birth to school age through content specific to children's identified interests and abilities.

"Te Whāriki, in köhanga reo is holistic" (Te Korowai, 1995, p. 14) and the content of the programme is integrated using te reo Māori.

Te reo is numerical and spatial. Activities like poi and haka are too. They include numeracy-based activities such as counting and te reo is too e.g. tena koe, hello to one, tena korua, hello to two people and so on.

Participation and involvement in köhanga reo

Parents and whānau decide to use köhanga because "they have little or no Māori language or they have it and want their children to have it too."

The range and nature of parent and whānau involvement in köhanga varies.

"Whānau contribute in a variety of ways — money, food, they make resources, find people to help. The biggest challenge is all the meetings!"

Parents may contribute to köhanga reo by helping with fundraising and supporting staff as they work with children. They might be secretary of the köhanga or "run around for kaumātua who are teaching the reo". There is an expectation that parents and whānau will be involved in children's learning and in planning the programme. "Parents know Te Whāriki. They learn how children learn and they learn with them".

Involvement in köhanga reo is influenced by parental confidence, lack of te reo, cost and availability of transport, pressure from work outside the köhanga and fees.

"We identify what are the barriers to children being involved and try to provide for those".

Köhanga reo tries to help parents and whānau to be involved by providing:

• vans for transport;
• continual support by "assigning tuakana/teina whānau to support new whānau"; and
• induction processes. The induction processes help parents and whānau to clarify the philosophy and values of köhanga reo, to understand the commitment needed and the levels of whānau korero.

Parents and whānau are strongly involved in köhanga reo to ensure the survival of the language. When they are not strongly involved it is often because "they get off track. We (Te Köhanga Reo National Trust) re-induct them through re-chartering to more strongly involve whānau".
Quality learning experiences

Quality learning experiences, opportunities and learning outcomes of mokopuna and whānau pivot on the quality, depth and usage of the language within the kōhanga reo and the home. Quality and participation requires kōhanga whānau to engage in the curriculum for the mokopuna (Te Whāriki), undertaking planning and assessment, and accessing resources and information. Training for the kaiako, the parents and extended whānau is necessary. The pedagogical approach to further upskilling and strengthening the kōhanga is through the concept of “whanaungatanga”.

“Whanaungatanga” (Pere, 1994) draws on the importance of whakapapa or genealogical ties and the in-built collective responsibilities that this cultural pedagogy expects. Therefore the holistic package called “whanaungatanga” expects the whānau to support, guide and care for the mokopuna as well as their parents.

The driving force of “whanaungatanga” is the quality of cultural interactions between adults and adults (elders and elders; elders and parents; elders and kaiako; parents and kaiako; parents and parents; kaiako and kaiako). This is the kōhanga reo whānau. The other important inter-relationship is that with the mokopuna (elders and mokopuna; parents and mokopuna; kaiako and mokopuna; mokopuna and mokopuna). The depth of these relationships, the importance placed on positive interactions and the richness of te reo in the kōhanga reo and at home combine to provide quality learning experiences for children and whānau.

Perspectives on leadership

Leadership in kōhanga reo operates at all levels including the children. Children are encouraged to take leadership roles from an early age, "the child shall lead the way, even under two-year-olds are encouraged to lead". They lead waiata and karakia spontaneously.

A variety of skills are recognised in parents and they are encouraged to use them.

Leadership is role modelled by participants in the kōhanga whānau. More knowledgeable whānau give guided support to new whānau members in the kōhanga. Everyone has the opportunity to provide leadership.

Kaiako and parents, with guidance from kaumātua, take responsibility for children's learning. When support is needed "we look at the need and find the right support for that need". Generally, those who take responsibility for children are "supported by whānau, kaumātua, kaiako from other kōhanga, the National Trust, hapū and iwi, if appropriate, and sometimes by Māori in the Inland Revenue Department, Education Review Office and the Ministry of Education".

There are no restrictions about who can work with children in kōhanga reo.

There is an open-door policy in kōhanga reo. Te reo must be spoken and when we employ staff they must be at least semi or competent in te reo.

It is the adults themselves in each kōhanga reo who take responsibility for their own learning. The National "Trust will prompt the whānau if necessary and ERO may identify needs" to be addressed. "Support given is driven by the needs of the whānau. They are managing a small
business and support is available through the Trust and workshops" that are held at district level. "Up to 200 people may attend these hui".

**Perspectives on the outcomes achieved in Köhanga reo**

The cultural, social and educational outcomes achieved for children by participating in köhanga reo were identified as learning and speaking te reo Māori; “knowing who they are and where they belong” through a strong sense of cultural identity; confidence to participate in a Māori context; making friends and ultimately learning to be a good citizen.

For parents and whānau, the educational, cultural and social outcomes achieved by participating in köhanga reo include:

- understanding that learning is lifelong;
- learning and speaking te reo;
- being part of a community of learners;
- upskilling themselves through involvement in the administration and management of the köhanga reo;
- empowering parents and whānau to make decisions;
- determining for themselves what whānau needs;
- friendships with other whānau which brings about a greater collective whānau, "a bigger whānau as a result" of their involvement;
- collective responsibility for all children; and
- being a good citizen.

There are a range of outcomes achieved for the wider community as a result of children, parents and whānau participating in köhanga reo. At the broadest level, there is the opportunity for communities to value other cultures because for non-Māori, köhanga reo has made Māori more visible in the community and “they are beginning to appreciate te reo”. Köhanga reo provides teachers of te reo and tikanga Māori to the community. "The community keeps taking our kaiako and kaumatua". Involvement in köhanga reo has created the need for more kura kaupapa Māori so children, parents and whānau can continue their involvement in Māori immersion education.
Section Five

Playcentre

Philosophy, history and operation

There is nothing like it in the world. A uniquely New Zealand way of educating families, Playcentre has moulded its own identity, its own philosophy and practice through a plaiting together of strands – strands of ideas, practices, personalities, and cultures (Stover, 1998).

The playcentre movement began in New Zealand in 1942 during World War 2. It places emphasis on both parents and children as learners, and is one of few ECE organisations world-wide where parents are trained to be educators of their children, and are expected to take collective responsibility for the education of young children, and the management and running of the playcentre (Hill, Reid, & Stover, 2000).

The New Zealand Playcentre Federation’s mission statement is “Quality early childhood education – a co-operative family/whänau experience”. The New Zealand Playcentre Federation fulfils its mission in the following ways:

1. Early childhood education centres

   It provides an early childhood education option for whänau/families through the operation of playcentres which offer a safe and secure learning environment for children birth to six years; which emphasises child-initiated play and the importance of whänau/families as first educators of their children; and which are run co-operatively by parents/whänau as an extension to the family/whänau setting.

2. Adult education

   It provides a participatory programme of education for parents/caregivers/whänau or families that emphasises self-help and personal development. It covers areas such as child development, play and learning, parenting skills, planning and delivering early childhood education programmes, group and facilitation skills and management skills. Courses are offered in a flexible manner that acknowledges family commitments and obligations, and includes both formal and informal education opportunities.

3. Educational publications
It provides publications and resources primarily to enable Playcentre members to enhance their parenting skills and train towards gaining their early childhood care and education qualifications. In addition such resources are available for other individuals or organisations, particularly those involved in the field of early childhood education. (New Zealand Playcentre Federation Vision Document, October 1999).

The philosophy of the playcentre movement is based on underlying values:

- A belief in the family/whānau as the most important setting for the care and education of the child. Children have the opportunity to reach their full potential when parents/caregivers/whānau understand their development and take part in their learning. The playcentre movement emphasises the benefits of these adults and children learning together.
- An early childhood education service, run co-operatively by playcentre families, is a positive early childhood education option in New Zealand. Parents with training and support can expand their skills and make a positive contribution to high quality early childhood education. These early childhood experiences, actively involving parents/caregivers/whānau and children, are a valuable investment in the future.
- The effectiveness of early childhood education programmes and the learning environment is enhanced when parents/caregivers whānau have choice and are involved in decisions about their children; are recognised as first and best educators of their children and are encouraged and supported in this role; and have their uniqueness and their child’s uniqueness recognised in the programme. Children cover a mix of ages “creating benefits of nurturing, role-modelling, social interaction and family atmosphere. Integration of parents/caregivers/whānau “is central to the learning experience”.
- Playcentre facilities should provide a stimulating and “physically, emotionally, and culturally safe” environment; reflect the family and community environment in which they operate; and offer a variety of opportunities for child-initiated play experiences “with emphasis on fun, learning, and choice, and to enhance parent/child interactions”.
- Training aims to strengthen self-esteem, improve parenting and personal skills and empower parents as “first and best educators of their children”. Delivery of training is practical, flexible, personalised and comprehensive.
- There are important benefits from the playcentre movement. “The operation of an independent, largely voluntary organisation, within public funding systems, is an appropriate and positive contribution to early childhood education in New Zealand. Whānau/family involvement in the operation and management of the playcentre movement has benefits of achieving organisation goals and meeting the rights of parents/caregivers/whānau to be involved in decision-making relating to the education of their child. (New Zealand Playcentre Federation Vision Document, October 1999).

Information about playcentre numbers, children and families

In 2003, there were 482 licensed and chartered playcentres nation-wide, catering for 15,200 children, and 28 licence-exempt playcentres catering for 466 children. The number of licensed and chartered playcentres has steadily decreased from 621 in 1990, to 503 in 2001 and 482 in
2003. The numbers of children have decreased from 22,668 in 1990 to 14,786 in 2001, with a slight increase to 15,200 in 2003. The long term roll decreases have been attributed to the trend towards women entering the paid workforce and the sessional nature of playcentre which “presents further issues in terms of childcare for parents in full time employment” (Education Review Office, 2000).

Murrow (2002) provided information about who uses playcentre from her national survey of randomly selected playcentre parents within 298 randomly selected playcentres, and telephone survey of parents of pre-school children.

She found that playcentre respondents compared with users of other types of early childhood education service:

- on average had slightly larger families;
- were less likely to have only one child in total;
- had, along with respondents who used kindergarten, the highest mean number of children aged zero to five not yet at school;
- were much more likely to be aged 30 or over;
- were slightly more likely to identify as Māori;
- were more likely to be legally married;
- were less likely to have a degree or equivalent qualification; and
- were more likely to have a partner who worked full-time in the paid workforce.

Many playcentre respondents used another early childhood education service in addition to playcentre: 16% used kindergartens, 15% used education and care centres and 22% used unpaid minders. Forty-three percent did not use any other service.

Rurality

Many playcentres are located in rural communities. Playcentre has the highest number of services in rural locations of any licensed service. Forty-two percent of all licensed rural education and care services are playcentres. 179 out of 492 playcentres (36%) were in rural locations at 1 January 2002, and a further 60 were in minor urban locations. This compares with 28% of kōhanga reo, 7% of home-based, 4% of education and care and 2% of kindergartens.

Rural location is also a feature of licence-exempt services, including playcentres. In all 197 of 622 licence-exempt services (32%) are rural. Seventeen of the 28 licence-exempt playcentres (61%) are rural.

Operation of playcentre

Playcentres provide sessional early childhood education to children aged between birth and school starting age. There may be 10 half-day sessions per week, but many operate for fewer sessions. A child may attend up to five sessions per week. A session can be up to 4 hours in length.
Playcentres cater for mixed ages, from babies to 4 and 5-year-olds, with children aged under 2½ years having a parent or nominated adult present. Podmore’s (1991) investigation into how to cater effectively for the needs of children under age 2½ years in two regional playcentre associations found some very positive comments about the impact of this age group on others. The supervisors reported advantages mainly in relation to children’s social development (learning to share with, care for, nurture and understand children of different ages) and younger and older children learning from each other.

Parents/caregivers and whānau provide essential voluntary work within the playcentre in implementing the curriculum within playcentre philosophy, administration, management, maintenance and training.

Supervisor-led playcentres, employing a paid supervisor, are common in the South Island, team supervision in the central North Island, and group supervision in the upper North Island. Team supervised and group supervised playcentres usually do not employ a paid supervisor. Parents work as a collective to undertake all pedagogical roles, including curriculum delivery, planning, assessment, evaluation and self-review. Many parents participate in playcentre training and professional development.

All or most of the administrative, management and maintenance tasks involved in running a playcentre are undertaken by volunteers. Playcentres elect members to positions of responsibility to take responsibility for particular areas, e.g. president, secretary, education officer, enrolment officer, treasurer, and equipment officer.

Morrow’s (2002) national survey explored reasons why playcentre members held office in playcentre. Respondents held office because they wanted to contribute (29%), they wanted to be more involved (21%), because of the needs of the playcentre (16%), because others encouraged them (16%), and because no-one else wanted to do it (12%). The reasons for not holding office were most commonly that people did not have time (31%) and that people were new to playcentre (24%).

What respondents liked least was paperwork and administration (23%), unequal workloads within a playcentre (19%), the workload being too high (17%), and cleaning up (15%).

In small playcentres or playcentres where there are few volunteers, the burden of volunteer work can be especially heavy. A volunteer workload survey in 1995 (Early Childhood Education Project, 2000), filled in over a fortnight period by 4 playcentres, showed a mean 206 hours per fortnight were spent by playcentre volunteers delivering the programme (range 37 hours to 380 hours).

Playcentres find ways to pass on knowledge and skills to new parents so that shared knowledge is retained. Encouragement of “emergent leadership” is the way in which new parents come on board, and is a very important concept for playcentre.
No one person becomes entrenched in a position but others are encouraged to come through, learn by experience and grow into a position. The goal of current leaders is to prepare for those that follow. Trainees are encouraged and supported to become mentors to others, then supported to become co-tutors, commentators and managers of the programmes (New Zealand Playcentre Federation Inc, 2003, p.5).

**Playcentre associations**

Each of the 482 playcentres is affiliated to one of 32 playcentre associations. Each association is expected to offer its playcentres the following support:

- ensuring routine property and equipment practices are carried out;
- providing support for families;
- ensuring professional development for centre management;
- providing a system of support for each playcentre; and
- providing a parent/adult education programme with the agreed curriculum.

The largest association, Canterbury, covers 50 playcentres, but most cover 12–20 playcentres. Most associations employ staff to assist parents in their member playcentres, e.g. provision of curriculum and management advice.

The playcentre association receives and administers Ministry of Education bulk funding and Equity Funding. Many playcentre associations have internal equity arrangements for sharing the bulk funding. The associations have a maintenance pool to which playcentres contribute and pay for some facilities, repairs and maintenance costs. Some associations act as the employer of paid and honoraria remunerated staff, and bill the playcentre for staff it has agreed to employ. In others, the playcentre employs and pays the staff.

**New Zealand Playcentre Federation**

Each playcentre association in turn is affiliated to the national representative body for playcentres, the New Zealand Playcentre Federation. The Federation has goals in the following categories:

- those associated with services provided – centres, publications and adult education;
- those associated with areas which provide the necessary back-up and support which ensure services and facilities are effectively and efficiently maintained (Vision Document, October 1999).

The Federation is funded through levies from associations for regional capital works funding and training, and receives a training grant from the government, which is distributed to the associations.

The Federation makes representation to the government on matters concerning parent education and education of children and families. It:
promotes and encourages the development of playcentre activities throughout New Zealand;
coordinates the activities of playcentre associations;
raises funds and receives levies from associations;
promotes research into early childhood education; and
publishes the Playcentre Journal three times a year and provides other written resources.

Licensing, regulatory and funding requirements for licensed playcentres

A licensed playcentre is bound by the Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations with respect to licensing, health and safety standards, and curriculum and management standards, and miscellaneous provisions. The staffing schedule is different from that of teacher-led centre-based services covered by these regulations (education and care centres and kindergartens). Staffing, number of children attending at any one time, induction and operating requirements are set out in a licensing agreement between the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Playcentre Federation. The agreement is tailored to playcentre settings. It states that:

- Each playcentre session will be organised, equipped and managed on a co-operative basis, with the programme partly provided by the parents of the children attending the session.
- The ratio will be a minimum of one adult to every five children.
- All children under the age of two and a half must be accompanied by a parent or nominated caregiver.
- A maximum of 30 children will attend each session.
- Playcentres will provide an introductory process for enrolling families.
- Each playcentre must belong to an association affiliated to the New Zealand Playcentre Federation.

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 (1:8 or 2:30 for over 2s, and 1:5 for under 2s). The specified number of children allowed to attend is a smaller number (30) than is allowed in teacher-led services for over-twos (50). One difference between teacher-led services and playcentre is the maximum number of children able to attend at any one time (30 in playcentre, up to 50 in teacher-led services) and ratios, which are better in playcentre. Group size and ratio are both “structural” features of quality (Smith et al., 2000).

Licensed playcentres must meet qualification requirements which are gazetted. These are different from other services, and relate to playcentre qualifications. Qualifications are linked to whether a playcentre receives rate 1 funding ($2.67 per child per hour for children over 2 years; $5.33 per child per hour for children under 2 years) or rate 2 funding ($2.96 per child per hour for children over 2 years; $5.92 per child per hour for children under 2 years). Note these funding rates are at 2003 when this information was gathered.

There are distinctions for rate 2 funding between qualification requirements for playcentres operating under group supervision and for playcentres where there is a supervisor as the “person responsible”. Group supervision requires at least three people present to hold specified playcentre
qualifications so that the playcentre course content for courses 2, 3 and 4 are covered collectively, and one person present to be in training for every 3 families enrolled. Supervisor-led playcentres require 2 people to hold specified playcentre qualifications, but these are set at higher levels.

Training and qualifications are therefore another area of difference between playcentres and teacher-led services.

**Licence-exempt playcentres**

The funding and requirements for the operation of licence-exempt playcentres are set out in the next section. However, playcentre association and New Zealand Playcentre Federation support systems described here are available to licence-exempt playcentres.

**Parent education and training**

Parent education and training is an essential feature of playcentre. There is a great deal of emphasis put on adult training and education by the playcentre associations and the New Zealand Playcentre Federation. A sub-committee of the New Zealand Playcentre Federation, Playcentre Education, is responsible for the governance of playcentre training and education. Playcentre Education is a New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) registered training provider.

It offers the Playcentre Education Diploma, accredited by NZQA at Level 6 on the Qualifications Framework. It is made up of 6 component courses that build on each other. The programme includes: communication, leadership, group processes, effective family support, the development of skills and theory of the facilitation of learning events for adults as well as children, cultural awareness and Te Tiriti o Waitangi education, parenting, child development and specific early childhood content.

Playcentre Education receives partial tertiary funding for the Playcentre Education Diploma.

The New Zealand Playcentre Federation also holds a service specific professional development contract to provide professional development to playcentres. The contract in 2003–2004 delivered to approximately 120 predominantly rural playcentres and 24 clusters from the Far North to Southland. The playcentre professional development programme emphasises use of action research and participatory methods. Playcentres may use other providers for their professional development.

Playcentres have a changing membership, with parents/caregivers having varying skills and experiences. Bringing everyone on board is a very important principle. Two research projects using action research (de Vocht, 2001; Moriarty, 2001) in New Zealand playcentre settings involved the whole playcentre in identifying needs, training and implementation of action plans and resulted in changes to aspects of literacy within each setting. These projects underscored the value of participatory and active professional development methods within a playcentre setting where all members can be involved.
Many adult education programmes are offered by playcentre, including parent education, workshops on play, management and tutor training. A large number of people are involved in these. The New Zealand Playcentre Federation statistics show that in 2002 there were 749 adult education events attended by 7127 participants.

Curriculum

Hill, Reid and Stover (2000) point out that playcentre has evolved since its origins in 1941, and this evolution has been influenced by theorists and ideas. They warn, however, that uncritically maintaining an existing philosophy and practice may blind members to the ideas of modern theorists.

How Playcentre responds to new ideas is often limited by its focus on its own practices, so how influential modern theorists can be on Playcentre is debatable. For in claiming to be unique in the world, Playcentre training and its publications have had the paradoxical effect of carefully incorporating current international theory and practice, while at the same time deliberately diminishing their influence (Hill et al., 2000, p.33).

Hill et al. (2000) suggest that there are particular challenges in ensuring centre practices value the diversity of cultures in New Zealand communities, while children and parents continue to feel secure in their own cultures.

Key informant perspectives on the goals and aspirations of playcentre

Playcentre key informants identified that playcentre philosophy is founded on the notion that parents and children learn together in the playcentre environment. Playcentre is described as a place for the whole family where parents and children are valued and supported.

Playcentre is for and about families — its strength lies in the creative combination of parents and children learning together.

Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in training opportunities which are designed to "strengthen self-esteem, improve parenting, develop personal skills and empower parents by expanding their capabilities as the first and best educators of their children" (New Zealand Playcentre Federation Education Charter, 2003, p. 4).

Playcentres strive to achieve quality education especially through the social aspects of education such as enhancing relationship and communication skills and for children to reach their potential by learning and growing alongside parents, caregivers and whānau.

Key areas of difference and similarity between playcentres and teacher-led services

The key informants from playcentre identified the main areas of difference between playcentres and teacher-led services as funding and resourcing; structural features; parents as educators; the
programme of activities for children; parent and whānau involvement, development and social support.

**Funding and resourcing**

Playcentres are funded at the same rate as education and care centres\(^3\). However different costs drive their operation. Funding in playcentres can be spent "more on consumables e.g. glitter and quality paint because (in a teacher-led service) the bulk funding pays teachers' wages".

**Structural features**

Key informants identified the following structural features as differences between playcentres and teacher-led services.

- **ratios of adults to children.** "In playcentres there are more adults to the number of children" than in teacher-led services. There is "a lot more one-on-one interaction" in playcentres. You can work and talk with children because of the ratios while someone else supervises. Therefore learning for children is sustained.

- **mixed age groups.** "There's two week old babies and children that are over five years old" together in the playcentre session;

- **centre size.** In playcentres the overall number of children in a session may be lower than in kindergartens and childcare centres;

**Parents as educators**

Key informants thought that the diversity of parents’ backgrounds in playcentres provides a variety of adult role models. "The different backgrounds of parents provide a different skill base" from teacher-led services. "The children have different role models … whether those are cultural, religious, spiritual or whatever".

**Programme of activities**

Key informants noted a high level of "intimate knowledge of individual children and their relationships" in playcentre groups. They also identified that routines in playcentre are less obvious and "very different (from) in childcare". Playcentre parents toilet and feed their own children so less time is taken up with routines for groups of children. The assessment, planning and evaluation of playcentre programmes are different from teacher-led services. Playcentre parents create portfolios for and work with their own children, while in teacher-led services teachers undertake this work for all children.

---

\(^3\) From 2005, teacher-led services have been funded at higher rates than playcentres.
Parent and whānau involvement, development and social support

Key informants affirmed that there is a high level of family involvement in playcentres because parents have an "emotional attachment to their children". There is a "sense of belonging" that values the role of parents in a different way to the way parents are involved in teacher-led services. The adult friendships formed at playcentre continue beyond the session which is why parents know about other children as well as their own.

Parent involvement in education and training is part of the playcentre philosophy. Parents and children learn together at playcentre. Parents are "on the session with their child and they're also practising all that stuff when they go home". "The style of training is gradual. Parents learn, practice and role model" what they learn while in training as they work with their children in the playcentre session as well as at home.

Funding, the licensing regulations and chartering requirements, equipment and curriculum provision services were identified as key areas of similarity between playcentres and teacher-led services. The following views were expressed in particular:

- "the way these services are funded through the number of child hours per session is the same";
- the same regulation and Charter requirements apply;
- overall the resources and equipment provided is similar;
- the curriculum learning areas are similar;
- both playcentres and teacher-led services use Te Whāriki as their curriculum; and
- there is a commitment to review practices and adapt to meet community needs.

Participation and involvement in playcentres

Playcentre key informants identified that parents, caregivers and whānau decide to use playcentres because of location, availability of alternative ECE services, cost, adult support and opportunities for parents to be involved with their children. They highlighted the following reasons for participation in playcentres:

- location. "Playcentre is often the only option in rural areas";
- the "gap between the playgroup type situation and formal kindergarten for parents who are at home";
- the low cost of attending playcentres;
- "for adult support initially". "The relationships built with other parents and children" both in the playcentre and the way those relationships develop outside playcentre;
- the opportunity to make "adult friendships and they want friendships for their children and a lot of them want to stay with their child";
- the opportunity to be involved in decisions affecting their children's learning;

They want to be involved in their child's growth and development.

They are the educators of their children.
Playcentres strongly involve parents because "playcentre is about parents and families. This is as important to playcentre as children's education".

"The reason they start (with playcentre) might be quite different to the reason why they stay". The range and nature of involvement in the playcentre movement depends on which aspects and levels of the structure parents become associated with. The main roles identified were:

- as educators, providing a "safe and friendly environment for children to learn";
- being involved in "everything, the management, accountability, cleaning (the playcentre) and programme provision";
- fundraising, promotion work and providing training and support for other adults.

In playcentre "we're it. If we wish (something) to happen we have to make it happen". "They (parents) do everything really".

```
Everything in playcentre is governed by the people … even at Federation level. You know there is a huge component of volunteers there so it's just another level of playcentre really, doing a different job.
```

At Association level, parents can hold a particular position such as property officer or education officer. At Federation level it is similar because "the associations are the Federation and the centres are the association".

There is a minimum level of involvement required at playcentres i.e. "one session per week, one meeting a term and one job (which could be anything) from feeding the fish to being president".

```
You choose which direction or channel to enhance yourself in".
```

Some playcentres pay cleaners and supervisors and there are "some paid jobs" at Association and Federation levels e.g. administration, financial and training positions "but parents are still the main decision makers".

Parents can be involved in a playcentre by:

- being educators and working with their own children
- being a committee member or office holder and pooling ideas and strategies;
- attending workshops and courses; and
- being a role model for other parents and "supporting each other as a community".

Parents and whānau are supported to make links with community organisations and services through their playcentres. For example, “when children with special needs are identified, support is offered”. At a national level, through the Federation, community linkages are made with national organisations such as the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Education.

Parental involvement in playcentre can be influenced by
Having the time and money not to have to go to work or feel pressured into going to work by partners. Having supportive partners, people who can mind the children, somebody at home so it doesn't disrupt their whole family life.

Other influential factors were identified as the location of the playcentre and the availability and cost of transport. There is also the "need for parents to get to know other people" and to make "contact with others through their children". Parent’s perceptions of playcentre and what they have "heard about playcentre" impacts on choice and involvement.

In rural communities the time of year can influence involvement in playcentres. "It's very seasonal and parents can be working on the farms helping with lambing etc.”.

Sometimes parents’ ill health, the workload of playcentre and the "burnout from involvement at centre level" can influence a parent’s contribution. However, “Playcentre allows parents to withdraw and return”. For many parents "the belonging, wanting to give something back to playcentre" keeps them involved.

Practices that may help parents and whänau to be involved in playcentre were identified as:

- more information about playcentre and promoting it before parents decide which early childhood service to use;
- "promoting that it's OK to stay at home and place value on being with children";
- suggesting different ways of "adult sharing". This is where a parent and child may go to playcentre two days a week and then their child goes with a friend two other days a week; and
- more involvement at a higher political level because "it's (playcentre) always been undervalued politically".

**Perspectives on quality learning experiences**

Good quality in playcentres was described by key informants as "cheerful, enthusiastic adults and children".

Children would be playing happily with adults involved or close by.

Good quality resources, a variety of equipment, an appealing set-up in an inviting, safe environment with appropriate activities for the children where "children and adults are engaged with each other" describes the way key informants identified quality in playcentres.

Programme planning and evaluation was emphasised by one playcentre association.

"As in management of the centre, when they send their evaluations out we expect to see they have linked it (the programme) to Te Whāriki and to know a bit more than what's just happening now. That they’ve worked out that this is where the kids are now and this is where we need to be planning for the next year”.

A key factor that helps playcentres provide good quality is “motivated, inspired parents and family members including grandparents”.

People (who are) able to be involved and feel strongly they are in the right place.
Parents who are proud of what they offer and do.

The provision of adult education and parent involvement in playcentre training opportunities underpins the quality of learning experiences in playcentres. There needs to be "belief in parents as experts, professional development I think is what our training is".

Adult education is key and how it's done. You see quality on session when parents are in training. Continual enthusiasm through training.

Key informants identified other factors that influence quality in playcentres as adequate funding, well maintained equipment and property and good access to more knowledge and resources through support systems provided by playcentre associations.

**Perspectives on leadership**

Leadership in playcentre is described as "emergent. People emerge into leadership roles" with encouragement and support. Playcentre takes "the team approach to leadership where parents are encouraged to move "outside their comfort zone" because “people believe in you”.

Everyone has opportunities to provide leadership in playcentre. "It's a team effort", a co-operative style of leadership in a "flat structure" where the person or people with the skills take a leadership role depending on what is needed.

All parents take responsibility for children's learning in playcentres. Usually there are supervision teams with group leaders. In some playcentres there is a supervisor who takes responsibility for the session but parents are still involved with their child's learning.

The supervision teams, group leaders and supervisors are supported by their local association. The Playcentre Federation and the local associations provide education programmes, training and professional development through advisers to support those who take on a regular role for children's learning.

Overall, it appears there are no restrictions about who can work with children in playcentres. "People are not usually able to be alone with children because of the high number of adults on the session". Parents who arrive at playcentre "under the influence of substances" are restricted in their work with children. Supervisors who are employed in playcentres are police vetted.

All our employed staff who work with children or may have sole responsibility for children are police vetted. Or like me, I visit centres so I have contact with children and get paid to do that so I'm vetted.

**Perspectives on the outcomes achieved in playcentres**

Confident, self-assured children with good social and communication skills and, a "thirst for learning" were the significant outcomes identified by the key informants from playcentre.

It (playcentre) produces well-rounded, capable children … eager to learn.
Children from playcentre "know who they are". They develop a range of social skills and "participate in programmes planned with individual needs in mind".

Key informants affirmed that the outcomes achieved for parents have an impact on their personal development and work prospects. There are social as well as educational outcomes achieved for parents. Often they make lifelong friendships at playcentre. Through their involvement they build self-esteem from the success they experience in developing new skills and knowledge.

You often hear the story of playcentre people that finally do go back to the workforce and they say 'my CV with all my playcentre stuff was what got me the job'.

The involvement of parents and children in the playcentre movement impacts on the wider community as parents remain involved with their children throughout their schooling and lives.

The playcentre people are the community. They're the teachers at the school, they're the principal … the teacher aides in (early childhood) centres … and the Board of Trustees. Our whole Board of trustees are all playcentre people.

Playcentre key informants thought that these outcomes were achieved because of the fundamental philosophy of playcentre where children and adults learn together, by having "good role models" and through their adult education programmes.

These key informants felt strongly that the role of parents at home with children is undervalued in society and by government. There is an underlying need for "recognition of the importance of raising children to be the future generation". External support to assist playcentre achieve the identified outcomes could involve:

- access to and availability of facilitators outside playcentre;
- more funding and resources for renovations and upgrading buildings and, to support parent education and assist the Federation;
- free advertising for playcentres to promote the philosophy and advertise for staff when needed;
- fewer demands for paper evidence from groups such as ERO;

Their reports identify positive happenings but they want the documents as well. Parents know their children and others well.

- working more closely with other organisations to foster their understanding of playcentre.

Those involved have a strong commitment to the playcentre philosophy.

Playcentre helps parents. People are passionate about what they do.
Section Six

Pacific Islands early childhood groups and licensed Pasifika early childhood services

Philosophy, history and operation

It is important to understand the context and the background to the development of Pacific Islands early childhood groups and licensed Pasifika early childhood centres because the growth of these two types of early childhood provision has been closely linked. Research evidence attests to the fact that parents and the wider Pacific communities continue in large part to support both kinds of services (Mara, 1998, p. 37). The push for licensing of Pasifika centres however, has been as a consequence of a number of cultural imperatives, circumstances and policy initiatives since the 1980s. The development of Pasifika playgroups into licensed and chartered centres has mainly been due to policies developed by government agencies, and targeted funding and resources being made available to Pacific communities. In large part however it has been the fulfilment of aspirations of the Pacific communities themselves to access quality, affordable early childhood education and care for their children growing up in New Zealand/Aotearoa that has led to the present dual provisions.

Pacific Islands early childhood groups were formerly known as Pacific Islands early childhood language groups (PILGs) and licence-exempt playgroups. They have been established throughout New Zealand since the mid 1980s, although the first group, Lemali Temaita a Samoa, was set up by a group of Samoan and Cook Islands mothers at St Lukes Church in Tokoroa in 1972.

This is believed to be the first early childhood centre in New Zealand, demonstrating a programme in which the respective Islands’ languages and cultures were to the fore. One account describes ‘chants, songs, ditties, stories, picture books and stories written by the mothers. Dance and drama play an important part, using Pacific Islands instruments to explore rhythm patterns for dance accompaniments’ (May 2001, p.195).

The impetus for setting up these parent-led services arose mainly from a desire by Pacific women to ensure that their Pacific languages and traditions were passed on to succeeding New Zealand-born generations. “The focus of these groups was the maintenance and fostering of Pacific Islands language and cultural values” (Robinson, 2002, p.8). Initially Pacific women from the Pacific Womens Council (PACIFICA) and a number of church ministers’ wives set up groups that were located in church facilities where most Pacific communities gather. In the early years of
development Pacific language groups were also set up in garages, community halls and people’s homes prior to them acquiring more permanent venues or purpose built centres or premises.

Across the Pacific communities there has always existed a measure of competition to become licensed and chartered. Very few of the PILGs set up in the 1980s and 1990s expected to remain licence-exempt, parent-led services. Virtually all PILGs wanted (supported by parental expectation) to become licensed and chartered so that their staff/teachers could be paid (rather than work as volunteers), and the children attending would attract the childcare fee subsidy. Most importantly, with accountability to the Ministry of Education, Pacific parents would thereby have an assurance of quality provision alongside, kindergarten, childcare and playcentres. Ministry of Education policies and Early Childhood Development (ECD) provision of support services (which included a network of Pacific co-ordinators) were aimed at attaining targets set by the Ministry of Education for increasing the number of Pasifika early childhood services, including licensed and chartered Pasifika centres.

Between 1997 and 2001 ECD was contracted by the Ministry of Education to support the Pasifika licence-exempt groups including assisting them to become fully licensed and chartered services. A 1998 research study (Mara, 1998), which examined the progress towards licensing and chartering of Pacific groups, found there was a high level of agreement between agencies, national Pacific early childhood associations, centres and key informants about the barriers for licence-exempt groups achieving licensing and chartering. They all agreed that property and financial factors, both for centres themselves to access the funding they needed, and the financial support required for meeting and maintaining property standards, were the main barriers.

Policy initiatives to licence and charter Pasifika early childhood groups

A policy focus on the development of Pasifika licensed and chartered centres by the Ministry of Education began in the early 1990s. Further impetus to this initiative occurred in 1996 through the Pacific education strategy: Ko e Ako ‘a Kakai Pasifika: Pacific peoples’ education in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Despite this, the number of Pacific Islands early childhood groups and licensed and chartered centres in the 1990s only slightly increased in 1998-99 and levelled off since. The Pasifika Education Plan (Ministry of Education, 2001b) sets particular goals for increasing Pacific children’s participation in early childhood education and increasing the number and quality of Pasifika early childhood services.

Currently, there are 121 licence-exempt Pacific Islands early childhood groups catering for 2,417 Pacific children and their families. Of a total of 11,838 Pacific children in all early childhood services, 20.5% are in licence-exempt Pacific Islands early childhood groups, whilst 42% are in education and care services and 27.3% are enrolled in kindergartens. The Ministry of Education combines education statistics for education and care centres and Pasifika licensed and chartered centres in one category, and numbers of Pacific children in Pasifika centres are not recorded.

In a 2001 study of the effectiveness of ECD support to all licence-exempt playgroups (including Pacific Islands early childhood groups), Mitchell and Mara (2001) found that licensing and
Section Six

Pacific Islands early childhood groups and licensed Pasifika early childhood services

chartering was still taking about 6 years on average for these groups to achieve. It was a very long process and for some groups they would not have achieved that status without the support of ECD Pasifika co-ordinators and other mentors. One playgroup had definitely decided to remain a playgroup because they claimed they could be more involved with their children (without paid teaching staff being present), and because they believed their Pacific language would be used more in the playgroup than in a centre with trained staff. In addition, the charging of fees for a licensed and chartered service was considered a barrier to participation for many families, unlike attendance at a Pacific Islands early childhood group.

Professional development and support

In 1998 ECD reported that a further barrier for Pacific Islands early childhood groups to become licensed was a lack of co-ordination between the agencies set up to provide them with professional development and support. For example, in 1996 ECD had a contract to support 12 centres to become licensed and chartered. Only 6 of those centres were actually eligible to win discretionary grants from the Ministry of Education to enable them to complete buildings or modify premises. As a result some groups were held back from being established. This was less than encouraging for groups that had been in the process of attempting to meet the licensing requirements for some time. Fortunately, the unsuccessful groups were supported by ECD in a subsequent year through its Document of Accountability with the Ministry of Education.

A further factor in limiting the effectiveness of support to Pacific Islands early childhood groups and centres occurred when funding for the provision of support became contestable. In 1996 two Pacific early childhood organisations: Kautaha Aoga Niue (KAN) and Pacific Islands Early Childhood Council Aotearoa (PIECCA) were successful in winning Ministry of Education contracts. ECD noted at the time that this caused some confusion within the centres themselves as to which agency was providing which service because the tendered contracts spanned professional development, management and administrative support. Some Pasifika early childhood centre informants thought that although competition for development contracts assisted in the development of capability and capacity in Pacific providers, the Pacific early childhood sector could have been better served through more co-operation between the agencies, providers and services themselves (Mara, 1998).

In addition, the realities of becoming licensed and chartered early childhood services have become overwhelming for some Pasifika early childhood centres. The ongoing demands include: property maintenance; the purchase of resources; the provision of professional development; upgrading of staff qualifications; the taking on of management and employment responsibilities; managing waiting lists of families and children; and maintaining ongoing communication and liaison with service providers and agencies. These were all identified by Pasifika early childhood centres as significant post-licensing challenges (Mara, 1998, p.33). Evidence that requirements may be difficult for these centres to meet can be found in Education Review Office (ERO) effectiveness review reports. Pasifika early childhood centres, as a grouping, tend to have a list of
Section Six

Pacific Islands early childhood groups and licensed Pasifika early childhood services

non-compliance areas to attend to and appear to have had more frequent visits by ERO than other early childhood services (www.ero.govt.nz).

Training and qualifications

Government policies and regulations on staffing and qualifications in all early childhood provisions have had an impact on parents and staff in Pacific Islands early childhood groups and centres. First, although a range of tertiary education providers now offer courses and qualifications for Pacific early childhood education students the supply and demand for qualified Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands, Niuean and other Pacific teachers has never been adequately met.

This situation has occurred for a number of reasons at both pre and post training phases. First, the costs of training for women who are supporting families have been a major barrier to access such training. When Pacific women have got into training and received a qualification there may not be enough Pasifika licensed and chartered centres to work in. Consequently, although qualified, some Pacific graduates work for no pay in a Pasifika early childhood group or they (understandably) work in paid employment in another early childhood provision such as a kindergarten or an education and care centre. Graduates are also known to have stayed with a Pasifika early childhood group in order to help them fulfil the criteria for licensing and chartering whilst sacrificing an income. A further impetus for licensing also came from the parents for this very reason. They wanted to pay their teachers for the important work they do for their children.

In addition, Pacific teachers are having to upgrade their qualifications to meet new government qualification requirements, as the diplomas that were awarded in the late 1980s and 1990s no longer meet the qualification requirement for the “persons responsible” in teacher-led licensed and chartered early childhood education services.

Differences between Pacific Islands early childhood groups and licensed Pasifika early childhood centres

The differences for Pasifika services between being licensed and licence-exempt were articulated in 1998 by staff and parents in the centres themselves. The reported differences related to the employment and payment of trained Pasifika staff and as a consequence access for Pacific children and their families to a quality service. A centre can operate a full-day service whereas playgroups usually operate with shorter hours and less than five days a week. The informants signalled some drawbacks to licensing such as the possibility that parents and elders can become less involved as groups became more formal and structured (and teacher-led) and the fact that fees need to be charged affects access by many Pacific families (Mara, 1998).

The process of beginning operation as a Pacific Islands early childhood group and then going through the process of meeting the requirements for becoming a licensed Pasifika centre can only happen with a great deal of support from parents/aiga/fanan/kopu tangata. The wider Pacific communities such as the church communities and Pacific cultural associations have also played key support roles. This support provides the source of cultural and linguistic knowledge and skills that characterise the main philosophy and purpose of Pacific Islands early childhood groups and
Pasifika centres. Where parents and extended family networks remain involved, licensed Pasifika centres are seen to continue to operate not only providing education and care for the children involved but also support for the families and their communities in terms of culture and language maintenance and development. For example, a number of centres report that mothers in their centres have gone on into training and further education as a result of their involvement with staff and children at the centre. For these reasons many licensed and chartered Pasifika centres can still be considered as being parent and whanau-led services.

**Key informant perspectives on Pacific Islands early childhood groups**

**Goals and aspirations**

Key informants described the philosophy of Pacific Islands early childhood groups and Pasifika centres as using their own Pacific language and cultural values within the programme of activities they provide. This creates opportunities to maintain and promote Pacific languages and cultural values for these families within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Underpinning the philosophy of Pasifika early childhood education settings is "doing it the Pacific way", following the protocols specific to the child's culture within the programme so it is reflected in the environment of the setting.

Another aspiration is for children growing up in New Zealand/Aotearoa to participate in good quality early childhood education and care.

**Participation and involvement**

According to key informants, parents/aiga/fanau/kopu tangata decide to use Pasifika services because their "language and Pacific culture permeate throughout the programme".

Parents/aiga/fanau/kopu tangata also participate in Pacific Islands early childhood groups because they are accessible in terms of cost and location, are often connected with the local church, and parents appreciate being able to be involved.

[The Pacific Islands early childhood groups] are close to home and often in their church community. Parents can be involved and can be a co-ordinator. It's free [of cost] for them.

In Pacific Islands early childhood groups, like all licence-exempt groups, parents/aiga/fanau/kopu tangata are responsible for managing and running the group.

**Parents** run the programme and the group. Each parent is involved in the management, decision-making and administration of the group.

Church ministers and their wives are also both key leaders and supporters of parents/aiga/fanau/kopu tangata and Pasifika services’ programme of activities. Other support which may sometimes be used is available through REAP in some regions.
School activities and through Samoan Radio (in the case of aoga amata) where general education and early childhood education have their own weekly programmes.

Quality learning experiences

In Pasifika services good quality was identified as delivering the programme of activities in the service’s own language and protocol. Involvement of the Minister's wife as a role model and having quality resources with "plenty of space for running around" were key indicators of quality in church-based Pasifika services.

In Pacific Islands early childhood groups quality also depends on the leading parent educators. Often these people are called "teachers" – those who take a lead in the programme and provide activities so there is a "clear idea about what is going on in the group." Other parents/aiga/fanau/kopu tangata, Ministry of Education early childhood co-ordinators, and key early childhood education people support those who take on a regular role for children’s learning.

Perspectives on the outcomes achieved in Pacific Islands early childhood groups

There are important outcomes for Pacific children and families as a result of participation in Pasifika services. Firstly, parents maintain their Pacific languages and cultural values in Pasifika services. While most of these groups are total immersion, some are not. For some groups such as Cook Islands parents, they "learn their language and culture for the first time [in these services] because many are born in New Zealand".

A variety of education, social and cultural outcomes are achieved for all children, including Pacific children, when they participate in licence-exempt groups. There are opportunities for "learning activities not available at home". Children develop confidence to "take risks" and learn from the social experiences that being part of a group brings. It is important that children know "how to play with equipment and other children, and that they have made a friend". Children build self esteem and "a sense of identity" in these groups. They have the opportunity to learn and to maintain their own unique Pacific languages and cultural values.

There is an emphasis on the use of cultural protocols and language within Pasifika services and in the programme of activities. However, according to a key informant

There is minimal support (in terms of funding, professional development from government and the Ministry) for Pacific and parent-led services. We (Pasifika centres) are unique in our (cultural) diversity therefore there is an impact on the availability of support and professional development to meet our particular needs.
Section Seven

Licence-exempt playgroups, ngā puna kōhungahunga and community language playgroups

Philosophy, history and operation

Playgroups, community language groups and ngā puna kōhungahunga have different origins, and each type of playgroup has a different philosophical emphasis. All playgroups, however, are run by parents and whānau, who attend with their children. Playgroups have broad aims to support parents and provide socialisation opportunities for parents and children.

Robinson (2002) provides a brief history of playgroups. Family playgroups began operating in New Zealand in the mid 1960s, originally in “isolated rural areas and where urban isolation was experienced” (Robinson, 2002, p.6). According to the 1971 Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Preschool Education (the Hill Report), playgroups were supported by Māori, who felt at home there because of the opportunity to speak Māori and bring “a Māori flavour” into activities. Later, church organisations wanting to support young isolated mothers in the community, and provide a venue for both mothers and children to socialise, established playgroups. General playgroups today also include some with a special focus such as playgroups in women’s refuges, playgroups for teenage parents and some fathers’ playgroups. Their main aim is to have “parents providing a play and learning environment for their children” (Robinson, 2002, p.12).

Community language groups were established by ethnic communities alongside their own schools. The schools were teaching the language and culture of the ethnic community, e.g. Gujarati, Polish and Greek, to their children. In the 1990s, pre-school programmes started to be run alongside these, but with a focus on play as well as first language maintenance or revival.

Currently, community language groups

... meet to support the home language and culture of families who attend. The parents or children may be new immigrants or refugees whose aim is to maintain their first language
and culture or they may be established New Zealand families of second or third language descent who wish to revive the language of their heritage. These playgroups can be total immersion or bilingual where both English and the community language(s) are used (Robinson, 2002, p.12).

Māori whānau participated in general playgroups from the beginning. Ngā puna kōhungahunga “developed out of ECD’s general playgroups and a growing desire within Māori communities to provide playgroup experiences for their children and on ECD’s part a recognition of the special nature of services to Māori communities” (Robinson, 2002, p.9). These are whānau-based playgroups for Māori whānau, based on marae or community venues. They may operate in Māori immersion or be bilingual.

Playgroups are defined as “community-based non-profit making early childhood centres where groups of parents and children meet regularly with the purpose of providing early childhood care and education for the children and families attending” (NZ Education Gazette, 15 Feb, 1991). They are exempt from statutory licensing requirements (i.e. licence-exempt) provided they meet certain criteria. These criteria are:

- each playgroup meets for no more than one session of up to 3 hours on any one day;
- more than half the parents of children attending each session are present in the same play areas at all times throughout the session;
- the group of parents assume responsibility for each child attending the group; and
- the group operates as an informal, non-profit making community-based group (New Zealand Gazette, 1991).

Funding is provided by the Ministry of Education provided the criteria above and health and safety requirements are met, and statistical data required by the Ministry of Education is provided. The “checklist” to satisfy Ministry of Education about the operation of playgroups covers the above criteria, and also includes whether the group uses premises which are safe and suitable for children’s play and whether there is a broad-based educational programme operating.

**Playgroup statistics and structures**

At 1 July 2003 there were 757 funded playgroups. Of these, 562 were general playgroups catering for 16,250 children, 32 were ngā puna kōhungahunga catering for 408 children, and 121 were Pacific Islands early childhood groups catering for 2573 children. The 30 licence-exempt playcentres and 12 licence-exempt kōhanga reo are considered in the sections on playcentre and kōhanga reo respectively, since the playcentre or kōhanga reo support structures are available to them. Statistics for community language playgroups are counted in with general playgroups. In 1998 there were 14 active community language playgroups. In 1999 there were 757 funded playgroups. Of these, 562 were general playgroups catering for 16,250 children, 32 were ngā puna kōhungahunga catering for 408 children, and 121 were Pacific Islands early childhood groups catering for 2573 children. The 30 licence-exempt playcentres and 12 licence-exempt kōhanga reo are considered in the sections on playcentre and kōhanga reo respectively, since the playcentre or kōhanga reo support structures are available to them. Statistics for community language playgroups are counted in with general playgroups. In 1998 there were 14 active community language playgroups. In 1999 there were 757 funded playgroups.
Playgroups are usually managed by a parent committee and affiliated to a body such as a church, iwi organisation or community organisation that can provide support. Some have access to local services that play a supportive role, such as Rural Education Activities Programmes (REAP) coordinators. Until its incorporation into the Ministry of Education on 1 October 2003, Early Childhood Development (ECD) was the crown agency working with playgroups. According to ECD national staff, its role was:

- encouragement and advice on setting up a playgroup;
- administering funding;
- assisting groups with management;
- fostering a quality educational environment, with a focus on the principles of Te Whāriki. An important aspect is providing opportunities for children to socialise with each other and with adults;
- offering support for parents and their development, and an outcome of better parenting. Playgroup attendance may have spin-offs for parents and families from parent involvement, such as their accessing other services like health, reducing their isolation and supporting their wellbeing, and extra support for some groups such as teenage parents, new immigrants and families in refuges;
- offering opportunity for parents to interact with other adults and children of their own ethnic group and to preserve their own language through community language playgroups (Mitchell & Mara, 2001, p.50).

ECD has developed a range of resources which are now available through the Ministry of Education. The 2001 evaluation of ECD’s advice and support for licence-exempt playgroups (Mitchell & Mara, 2001) indicated that while some playgroup parents said they benefited from good advice and support, the quality of ECD’s advice and support was variable. Parents were also hungry for more resources. Infrastructure support is likely to be a key variable impacting on the quality of playgroup management and programmes. Robinson (2002) points out that success in managing a playgroup may depend on the commitment, skills and experiences of one or two individuals. Since there is high turnover of parents in playgroups associated with parents leaving (e.g. because their child goes to school or another early childhood service), maintaining a high level of management and professional expertise is an issue.

**Funding**

Licence-exempt groups were paid at the rate of $1.13 per child per hour regardless of the age of the child (at July 2003). Payments are made in April and October and based on approved applications. There is some one-off funding for assisting playgroups in low socio-economic areas, but the funding pool and total amount available to any one group is limited. Some playgroups access community funding for resources or to help pay for a co-ordinator.

Robinson (2002) raised a concern that there are often “new groups of parents inexperienced in community organisations and their ability to manage safely, what can be seen as a large sum of money”. She noted that sometimes ECD had to step in and help a group and suggested the
financial management burden could be minimised by a government agency providing equipment and supplies.

**Venues**

Venues for playgroups are usually community facilities, although some are provided in buildings on school grounds. Many playgroup parents have to set up and pack away equipment at the start and finish of the session. This was identified by Robinson (2002) as being a chore for some parents that could reduce the time available for children’s activities. It was also identified as a burden by Davies, Statham and Carroll (2000) in their review of playgroups in Wales. Access to buildings that are not permanently owned could also be a barrier precluding the attendance of children with special educational needs. There are some playgroups in New Zealand that do not have an outdoor play area. For others, safe access to outdoor play equipment and space may be an issue.

**Educational programme**

Playgroups are not required to meet the Desirable Objectives and Practices which covers all licensed and chartered early childhood education services. *Te Whāriki*, while not mandatory, is the early childhood curriculum followed by most licensed and chartered centres, but not usually by licence-exempt groups. Some licence-exempt playgroups use the ECD resource booklet *Learning environment for playgroups* (Early Childhood Development, 2001) published and distributed in order to help licence-exempt playgroups provide quality educational experiences and environments for children and adults. The resource has sections covering the playgroup environment, developing the education programme, creating play opportunities for infants, toddlers, and young children, and areas of play.

Parents in the evaluation of ECD’s advice and support to licence-exempt playgroups (Mitchell & Mara, 2001) identified the value of ECD resources for the programme, but would particularly have liked more visits from the co-ordinator with more of her involvement in the programme and more workshops on educational interactions and activities. The quality of the programme in playgroups will depend on the skills of parents running the programme.

Davies, Statham and Carroll (2000) noted that there is little evidence about the quality of provision for young children in playgroups. Their findings are discussed here because they have some relevance. Playgroups in UK have a paid playgroup leader, but are largely run by parents, and have similarity to New Zealand playgroups.

What there is (mostly from England) suggests that although there are good and poor examples of all types of early years provision, on average playgroups score less well on various measures of quality such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) or inspections than do providers of early years education in the maintained sector” (Davies et al., 2000, pp.11-12).

These authors thought it important to acknowledge that playgroups do not have the same level of resources or qualified staff as other groups and that “they also have particular functions which
may not be given weight when quality is assessed from an educational viewpoint, such as promoting personal development and supporting families” (Davies et al., 2000, p.12).

Key informant perspectives on playgroups

Perspectives on the goals and aspirations

The key informants who were interviewed about these licence-exempt groups all said that the main aims are twofold:

- to provide social and educational experiences for children; and
- support for parents through building self-confidence and positive social connections. These groups value the opportunity to build positive relationships between parents and the wider community and improve relationships between parents and their children.

Overall, the goals and aspirations of parent and whänau-led playgroups, ngä puna köhungahunga, Pasifika early childhood groups and community language groups are to:

- provide affordable social and educational opportunities for children;
- support parents with the early care and education of their infants, toddlers and young children in a play-based environment;
- provide parents with the opportunity to learn parenting skills and specific information about child development. They also gain knowledge about how infants, toddlers and young children learn by being involved in their children's play and education;
- encourage parents and whänau to meet regularly within their local community;
- provide co-operative community based groups for parent and whänau involvement; and
- provide an avenue for parents to develop social skills for working in a group, and to become involved in the administration and management of the group where there are few compliance requirements.

Ngä puna köhungahunga are based on tikanga and te reo Mäori. One of the main purposes of these groups is to build parents' confidence in te reo.

… strengthen them (parents), their understanding of child development and of being parents. Parents are a bit scared, not confident enough. They've had bad experiences. They're not sure if they have the skills to join in at Köhanga. At puna they are valued for their skills. We want parents confident (especially in te reo), to be able to say 'this is my child and how are you going to meet their needs under Mana Reo, Mana Atua and Mana Whenua?'.

The first report from the Evaluation of Equity Funding (Mitchell, Irwin, Royal Tangaere, Meagher-Lundberg, & Whitford, 2003, p.50) also found that some parents are not very confident about their own skills and identified that fear of not being able to speak Mäori language is a key underlying factor in non-participation in köhanga reo.

… if fluency in te reo is a prerequisite to participation, lack of fluency is a barrier.
Community language playgroups are heritage based. Their main purposes are cultural enrichment and to maintain the first language of children and parents. The first language is promoted alongside early learning experiences for children. It is interesting to note that not all parents involved in community language playgroups are speakers of the group's language but "they want it for their children".

Community language playgroups are different from new migrant groups. New migrant groups are formed to provide a safety net for new families in the New Zealand context. These parents want to learn English and have their children cared for. Often new migrant groups fail because these needs cannot be met through the licence-exempt service requirements for funding i.e. 50% of parents must be with children at all times. As a result parents take their children to licensed teacher-led early childhood education services while they learn English.

Key areas of difference and similarity between licence-exempt services and teacher-led services

Key informants identified several key areas of difference between licence-exempt services and teacher-led services. Their discussion centred on funding, resourcing and cost; structural features such as centre size and ratios of adults to children; parents as educators; parent and whānau development and the programme of activities for children.

Funding, resourcing and cost differences

Funding levels for licence-exempt groups are lower than for licensed and chartered parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services. Low funding levels and how funding may be used restricts the purchase of buildings for licence-exempt groups. There are problems associated with a lack of exclusive premises for some licence-exempt groups. Many licence-exempt groups must set up all the equipment and activities at the beginning of each session and then store them away at the end.

Many puna kōhungahunga and some playgroups need better resources and good premises to work from to avoid having to set-up and pack away” each time they meet.

Key informants identified that resources and networks of support are usually better established in teacher-led services. The lower levels of resourcing may mean that the activities provided for children can be variable in licence-exempt groups. “Teacher-led services are more predictable” because to operate, they must have licensed premises and meet higher regulated standards than licence-exempt services.

Structural features

Key informants saw playgroups as catering for younger ages.

Predominantly, these parent and whānau-led groups have children from birth to three years attending. In teacher-led services the children's ages range from around six months to school age.
Parents as educators

Key informants identified the high level of parent involvement as another area of difference between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{The formality of teacher-led services doesn't allow for parent involvement.} \\
\text{There is a richness in the programme where parents are involved.} \\
\text{Children settle quickly because their parents stay with them.}
\end{align*}
\]

Parents know their own and each other's children well because of the strong social networks that are often formed between families in these groups.

Parent and whānau development

Parents are able to develop a range of skills and knowledge by being involved in a co-operative, community based group because of the opportunities available for parent education through workshops and information provided by various government agencies and community groups. Examples of resources published for playgroups include:

- *Establishing a community playgroup* (Early Childhood Development, 2000). This booklet describes briefly what a playgroup is, legal requirements, starting a playgroup, funding eligibility and grants, running a playgroup, Māori cultural learning, education programme, planning play and areas of play.

Programme of activities for children

Te Whāriki was generally not understood in depth in licence-exempt parent and whānau-led services.

We explain Te Whāriki but programmes are activity based. Parents want guidance about activities to provide. They don't necessarily understand the interest-based programme approach.

Teacher-led services are "focused on children and their learning. Often parents (in playgroups) are there to talk to one another". In teacher-led services "their focus is on learning" and teaching whereas in parent-led services, particularly in licence-exempt services, "children play with activities”. The "level of learning in parent and whānau-led services is different" from that of teacher-led services.

Key informants described the main similarities between licence-exempt services and teacher-led services as the focus on children and programme content.

Children are the focus for both service types.
There is a genuine interest in children, a desire for children to get something out of it.

Parents want the best for their children. It is in the 'how' it is provided that makes it different.

There are similarities in the programme and its content.

What children actually do is similar.

We're all heading in the same direction. It's just a different level and different ways of doing things.

Another similarity between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services is that adults are involved with children.

Both have adults present whether they are teachers or parents.

All early childhood education settings have children and parents involved in some way.

Participation and involvement in licence-exempt services

Participation in licence-exempt groups relates to ease of access, what ECE services are available and, the maintenance and revitalisation of language and culture. One of the key reasons parents, caregivers and whānau decide to use licence-exempt groups is because:

It's easy. You can turn up, have three hours with neighbours and friends and go home. Parents want their children to have neighbourhood friends. They want good transition to the next step. It is a New Zealand aspiration for parents to want their children to have friends.

The availability of ECE services within a locality may determine why families participate in parents and whānau-led services. In some rural communities, "there is no other option" than the local playgroup for parents and whānau. In urban areas, where there is more choice, parents decide to go to a playgroup because they want to be involved in the local community, find some support for themselves and "feel they are contributing to their child's education".

Parents and whānau choose to participate in ngā puna kōhungahunga because they provide an opportunity to learn te reo Māori, it is a "non-threatening (environment) and similar experiences bring parents together. They can have a voice (in their child's learning), build on self-esteem and can stay with their children".

Parents can take a range of roles in licence-exempt groups.

"Parents set up the learning environment, choose the activities, clean up at the end of the session and purchase the resources. They're involved every step of the way".

"Parents are completely responsible for the education and health and safety of their children. They manage and can choose to be involved in the administration of the group".

Parents take on the "role of teacher, they watch their child's milestones". Parents share the responsibilities in these groups and make the decisions about "what will happen next".
"They want to be part of a community and raise awareness about what is happening for people, to support each other and take some responsibility for their community".

"Parents run the puna kōhungahunga. They decide what they want for their children with early childhood guidance (from Ministry of Education early childhood co-ordinators). Parents are learners as well as teachers. They learn off each other. They are observers of children, they watch what's happening and learn what is happening underneath".

When parents are not strongly involved in these groups, it may be because the foundation of the group is not formed strongly or there are "personality conflicts between parents". The culture of how the group operates affects parents' involvement. "Sometimes key people take on everything" and are not inclusive of others, neither is the workload shared co-operatively. There may be too many "rules and regulations (for some parents) and this can put them off". Another reason parents may not be strongly involved in licence-exempt services is when all the key people leave at once and a void is left in the group. However, key informants identified that it is "hard not to be involved" in licence-exempt groups.

The level of participation of parents in licence-exempt groups may be influenced by the time they have available, cost of and accessibility to the service, the quality of the premises and equipment, and parents' perceptions of the service. If, for example, there is pressure on parents to earn a living, their time to be involved in a licence-exempt group may be limited. The location of the group, its distance from home, and the availability and cost of transport also influence the range and nature of parent involvement in these parent and whänau-led services.

Other factors that parents consider when deciding their level of participation are the quality of the premises from which the group operates, access to the building for parents with pushchairs and the quality of resources. They need "a good hall with good storage and a good relationship with the hall provider" so the licence-exempt service can operate with minimal interruption.

Parent involvement may also be influenced by the confidence and education level of parents. "Parents who are teachers often take a leadership role because they have the knowledge and confidence to do so". However, personality clashes among parents and "the playgroup 'culture' influences involvement. Different parents go on different days because of the different culture created by parents within the playgroup".

The physical and emotional health of some women may affect their participation in and contribution to parent and whänau-led services because "women in difficult economic situations (or at home with young children) can be depressed".

**Management, professional and financial support**

Key informants identified areas where support could be given to help parents be involved in licence-exempt early childhood services. There is a need for financial, administrative, management and professional support in these groups. They suggested that paying towards parents' petrol costs could help make the group more accessible for families. Specifying clear roles and responsibilities for group members with clear descriptions of any administrative
requirements is important for the successful self management of a licence-exempt group. In some situations it may help to pay a person to co-ordinate the group and provide activities for the children.

Regular workshops for parents where they can gain confidence in their skills, knowledge about child development and the value of play support parents. Guidance from a knowledgeable early childhood education professional who can model a range of skills and "coach parents on social skills such as greeting new people" may encourage parents to become more confidently involved. Parents may also benefit from clear written information explaining what children learn during play episodes. This is often the knowledge that parents use at home. They "take tangible stuff home e.g. 'what can you set in place at home' to provide activities at home.

Key informants acknowledged the importance, particularly for mothers, to "know they are part of a community, (have the opportunity to) make friends and to meet other mothers". Successful licence-exempt groups are often "linked to other community groups like Plunket, church groups e.g. Presbyterian Support Services or even a midwife". They often share premises with a community group which may also help to provide resources and equipment and take a supportive role with any fundraising the licence-exempt group may undertake.

Licence-exempt groups strongly involve parents and whānau because it is a criterion for receiving Ministry of Education funding that 50% of parents/caregivers must be present at all times. Parents take part in the programme and management of the group. They plan ahead "for future key roles" so the group keeps operating. While parents can choose the range and nature of their involvement, they are actively encouraged to participate.

Some (parents) don't want to engage with children because they don't know how but the level of involvement is a matter of parental choice.

Parents like being involved in running the group. There is something in it for them and their children bring them back.

Perspectives on quality learning experiences

"Good quality" in these licence-exempt groups was identified by the key informants as the provision of a welcoming, orderly and inviting environment for adults and children; a good level of hygiene; quality resources and equipment and group times together for "sharing food and singing". This is a very important aspect of quality in community language groups.

It is often these times when tradition and culture are best understood.

According to these key informants, quality learning experiences occur when parents talk together and with their children and when all age groups of children “are acknowledged in some way through what is provided in the programme of activities”.

Brand new babies are wrapped up and in their parent's arms, with older babies on the floor, not in car seats.
Section Seven

Licence-exempt playgroups, ngā puna kōhungahunga, and community language playgroups

Four and five year olds are constructing and making contact with other siblings and their parents.

In good quality groups, there are clear routines and boundaries. Parents "have made connections with key networks in the community” to support transition to school or to other early childhood services. It is important that health issues are identified and "neglect and abuse are recognised" and addressed.

Good quality in ngā puna kōhungahunga was identified as "happy children communicating in both English and Māori with parents taking part and observing".

Financial and professional support were viewed as key factors that help playgroups provide good quality. Adequate Ministry of Education funding; access to good resources and equipment; access to support and contact with positive role models from Ministry of Education early childhood coordinators and the workshops for parents they provide help licence-exempt groups provide a good quality programme for children.

Providing access to knowledgeable people who can show parents what to do with children by giving them the language and showing how to interact with both children and equipment.

Perspectives on leadership

Playgroups don't exist without good leadership and facilitation from a key person.

Leadership in licence-exempt groups is

… largely through parental choice. A person who is willing to take on a role with the commitment to take on the … responsibility. Someone who is able to approach new parents, manage conflict, be a listener to parents, find out information and have some kind of analysis skill to improve things. Someone with vision”.

These key informants all said that leadership could be provided by any member parent with the relevant skills in these co-operative community based groups. Leadership is sometimes seen as fluid and flexible because often parents' leadership skills are emerging rather than established abilities. However, usually one particular person is responsible for Ministry of Education funding although all member parents and whānau are encouraged to be involved in making the decisions about how funding is used. In ngā puna kōhungahunga, as with most of these groups, it was agreed that there are key role models who naturally take a leadership role. The leader of a community language playgroup is often the "leader of the language who provides 'teacher' activities.

Key informants acknowledged that parents take the major responsibility for the learning of their own children and, at times, for other children as well.

Some groups organise (learning) by themes or by rostering parents to provide an activity. Some playgroups employ a co-ordinator to provide key activities for the day and to help clean up.
The people who take on a regular role for children's learning are supported by other parents, extended whānau, Ministry of Education early childhood co-ordinators and key ECE people.

Overall in New Zealand, it is Ministry of Education (formerly ECD) early childhood co-ordinators who take responsibility for adults' learning in these groups. They provide leadership, facilitation and support through workshops, providing information and publications.

ECD has made a difference with licence-exempt groups. They are no longer 'coffee mornings'. They are funded for teaching and learning experiences.

One key informant said "if we get it right during the setting up process parents, whānau and hapu take responsibility (for adults' learning)". Resources and information is "brought to parents attention" through workshops and informal communication.

REAP also provides support for licence-exempt groups in some regions. However, REAP does not operate in all regions and they appear to work differently from each other.

When asked about whether there are any restrictions about who can work with children one key informant commented that who "works with children has to be agreed by the parent group". However, generally there are no restrictions on who can work with children in these groups because "if 50% of parents are present (as required) then supervision of children is not an issue".

**Perspectives on the outcomes achieved in licence-exempt services**

A variety of education, social and cultural outcomes are achieved for children when they participate in licence-exempt services. There are opportunities for "learning activities not available at home". They develop confidence to "take risks" and learn from the social experiences that being part of a group brings. It is important that children know "how to play with equipment and other children and, that they have made a friend". Children build self esteem and "a sense of identity" in these groups. They have the opportunity to learn te reo Māori in ngā puna kōhungahunga or to maintain their Pasifika language.

Key informants identified that there are social, education and cultural outcomes achieved for parents by being involved in these groups. The social outcomes include being less isolated in their community and gaining confidence "depending on their previous experience", to form friendships and "good solid support networks" in the community. Parents learn about early childhood education and child development including the importance of play for children's learning in these groups. It is an opportunity to watch children achieve and learn new skills and knowledge. Parents move on in their own learning because:

> Parents take home what they learn at playgroup. When mothers make friendships at playgroup it enriches fathers' lives as well. Playgroups are co-operatives where people learn skills on the way".

The outcomes achieved for the wider community, by children, parents and whānau participating in these groups include:
confident children who "enjoy learning" and are "confident to go to school";

children who "understand about culture and their relationship with the community";

children and parents who are "proud of who they are";

parents who "take what they learn at playgroup and use it at home";

a network of people who know about and "look out for" each other;

access to opportunities to develop foundation skills that can be transferred into employment opportunities such as administration, financial and organisational skills; and

revitalisation of te reo and tikanga Māori through attending ngā puna kōhungahunga.

Licence-exempt services achieve a range of outcomes because each group meets regularly. “There's a routine. There's something stable about it”. "They need to be well resourced and equipped so parents feel there is a worthwhile reason for being there". These outcomes are achieved for parents, children and the community through good leadership to "bring it all together".

Views about the types of external support that could assist licence-exempt groups achieve positive outcomes include funding, resourcing and support from knowledgeable people. These groups need adequate funding. "They don't need a lot. New groups need a bigger set-up fund". It is important they have regular access to an early childhood expert "to support, guide and give knowledge" to parents, someone to help parents "understand why they are there, creating aspirations and vision". Finally, it was suggested that a community group "sitting alongside them to bolster them in times of need" is a valuable external support for licence-exempt parent and whānau-led services.
Section Seven
Licence-exempt playgroups, ngā puna kōhungahunga, and community language playgroups
Section Eight

Differences and similarities between parent and whänau-led services and teacher-led services

In this section we start by considering definitions of “parent and whänau-led” and “teacher-led” services. We then examine similarities and differences between parent and whänau-led services and teacher-led services in respect to responsibility for the education programme and managing the service, curriculum, training and qualifications, adult:child ratios and centre size, age groupings and leadership, professional and management support, and government resourcing. In order to compare “like with like” we restrict this comparison to centre-based services, i.e. we do not include home-based or hospital services.

Definitions

The terms “parent and whänau-led services” and “teacher-led services” were coined by the early childhood education strategic plan working group (Early Childhood Education Long Term Strategic Plan Working Group, 2001) which recognised that some common and some different framing conditions were necessary to support enhanced quality in these two different types of service. The early childhood education strategic plan working group proposed that qualifications and teacher registration requirements should be different in the two service types, with the regulations for teacher-led services being progressively extended to require an increasing proportion of regulated staff to be registered teachers. It made no specific proposals about qualifications for educators/kaimahi in parent and whänau-led services, but suggested that mechanisms, “such as professional development and itinerant teachers” should be developed to increase support for educators/kaimahi in these services.

The early childhood education strategic plan working group referred to teacher-led services as “EC services where teachers are responsible” (Early Childhood Education Long Term Strategic Plan Working Group, 2001, p.19). It defined parent and whänau-led services largely by their affiliations. It identified playcentres, kōhanga reo and licence-exempt playgroups as services that are established and run by parents and whänau, pinpointing the New Zealand Playcentre Federation’s mission statement and Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust’s Te Korowai as documents...
that highlight the integral role of parents and whānau in the education programme, and pinpointing the role of parents and whānau in establishing and running licence-exempt playgroups.

New Zealand has a long tradition of parent and whānau provided services under umbrella organisations such as the New Zealand Playcentre Federation Inc.⁴ and the Te Köhanga Reo National Trust.⁵ Both movements make valuable contributions to parents over and above the benefits accruing to children. In addition over 800 licence-exempt groups, established and run by parents and whānau for their children, play an especially important role for Pacific peoples and in isolated communities, where they may be the only available early childhood experience. This strategy recognises that such services achieve quality practice in different ways from teacher-led services⁶, and seeks to reinforce and build on their strengths (Early Childhood Education Long Term Strategic Plan Working Group, 2001, p.25).

The government’s 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education Pathways to the Future – Ngā Huarahi Arataki adopted the same terminology, describing parent and whānau-led services as “ECE services provided by parents and whānau” (Crown, 2002, p.15), and noting that these services include playcentres, köhanga reo, and licence-exempt playgroups. Government policy with respect to qualification requirements outlined in the strategic plan differentiates between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services. Its strategy to increase the number of registered teachers filling regulated staffing positions applies only to teacher-led services and co-ordinators in home-based services (not to köhanga reo, playcentres, licence-exempt playgroups, or home-based carers). At 2003 this qualification differential is the only distinction the government has made between licensed parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services as distinct groups.

The government also differentiates between individual service types, e.g. between licence-exempt and licensed services, and between home-based services and centre-based services. Licensing agreements and charters establish some different requirements for specific services.

**Differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services**

**Responsibility for the education programme and managing the service**

The key features that the strategic plan working group identified as characterising differences between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services are:

---

⁴ The Federation’s mission statement is “Quality ECE - a co-operative family/whānau experience”.
⁵ In Te Korowai the Te Köhanga Reo National Trust sets out the kaupapa (policy) for Te Köhanga Reo which is “a total immersion Te Reo Māori whānau programme for mokopuna from birth to 6 years of age to be raised within its whānau , where the language of communication will be Māori”.
⁶ As defined in the Desirable Objectives and Practices, Te Korowai and Whāriki.
• who is responsible for providing the education programme and implementing the curriculum (parents and whānau or teachers); and
• whether parents and whānau attend regularly with their children.

The education programme and management in parent and whānau-led services

Responsibility for providing the education programme and implementing the curriculum usually rests partly or wholly with parents and whānau in playcentres, kōhanga reo and licence-exempt playgroups. Other parental responsibilities include managing and running the service.

The playcentre licensing agreement requires the “playcentre session to be organised, equipped and managed on a co-operative basis, with the programme partly provided by the parents of the children attending the session”. The charter agreement for kōhanga reo, Te Korowai (1995), describes whānau decision-making, management and responsibility (including responsibility for the mokopuna and Te Whāriki (mokopuna learning programme) as one of the four pou or posts, which are the cornerstone of the kaupapa. A role for parents and whānau in providing the education programme as part of the regulated ratios alongside staff may apply in some licensed Pasifika services, although Ministry of Education statistics do not give information on the extent to which parents and whānau fill regulated ratios. In playgroups more than half the parents of children attending each session are required to be present in the same play areas and the group of parents are required to assume responsibility for the children.

In practice, there are different mixes of parents, whānau and paid supervisors/kaiako/co-ordinators in playcentres, kōhanga reo, and licence-exempt playgroups. Playcentres for example may be “supervisor-led”, i.e. there are one or two supervisors working alongside parents, or operate with team/group supervision where parents and whānau comprise the education team and there are no paid supervisors. Kōhanga reo may employ kaiako and have different mixes of parents, whānau and kaumatua working in the education programme. Licence-exempt playgroups may employ a co-ordinator or teacher/s to provide the education programme. In some situations, parents and whānau who are not employees, may receive a koha or honorarium.

The education programme and management in teacher-led services

In teacher-led services, the education programme is provided by paid staff, and parents and whānau are not usually counted for regulated staffing. Kindergartens, through the Education Act, require registered teachers to fill the regulated ratios. Most education and care centres operate with paid staff filling all regulated ratios.

In community-based teacher-led services, parents and whānau often provide voluntary governance and management, and support the educational programme:

• Community-based ECE services are established as Incorporated Societies, Charitable, Statutory, or Community trusts, or are owned by a community organisation (e.g., City Council). There is usually an elected board or committee responsible for governance and management. Community based services are prohibited from making financial gains that are
Parents and whānau “help” in the educational programme in many kindergartens and some education and care services, but responsibility for the educational programme rests with employed staff, and the service can usually/always operate without parent help.

Curriculum

There are similarities and differences amongst parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services in respect to curriculum reflecting differences in whether they are licence-exempt or licensed and chartered rather than their type. Licensed playcentres and kōhanga reo, like licensed teacher-led services, are required to operate under the Education (Early Childhood Education) Regulations and follow the Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPs) (1996). The principles, strands and goals from Te Whāriki, the early childhood education curriculum) are embedded within the DOPs but Part B (Māori text) is not. Licensed and chartered services undertake to plan, implement and evaluate the curriculum based on the principles, strands and goals of Te Whāriki.

Licence-exempt groups have minimal requirements for education programme provision, and health and safety. They are not required to follow the DOPs and do not base their programme on Te Whāriki.

There are differences in curriculum according to service philosophy. The kaupapa statement for kōhanga reo includes total immersion in te reo Māori, extending to wairua, tikanga and ahuatanga Māori. Pasifika services provide immersion in their Pacific language and culture. Rudolf Steiner and Montessori have their own approach to curriculum.

Training and qualifications

The New Zealand Playcentre Federation and Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust provide their own training for parents and whānau leading to service-specific qualifications and encourage them to participate in these. In addition, they provide many opportunities for workshops, courses and wananga. There is no service-specific training programme leading to qualifications for parents and whānau in licence-exempt playgroups, although courses may be offered and parents and whānau may opt to undertake early childhood education training.

In teacher-led services from 2003, all new “persons responsible” had to be qualified teachers, and from January 2005 all existing “persons responsible” will have to be qualified teachers. The numbers will be extended over time:

- by 2007, 50% of regulated teachers are required to be registered teachers;
- by 2010, 80% of regulated teachers are required to be registered teachers or 70% of regulated teachers are required to be registered teachers and up to 10% of other regulated teachers can be
Differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services

in training towards a teacher education programme that is approved for teacher registration by the New Zealand Teachers Council;

• by 2012, 100% of regulated teachers are required to be registered teachers or 70% of regulated teachers are required to be registered teachers and up to 30% of other regulated teachers can be in training towards a teacher education programme that is approved for teacher registration by the New Zealand Teachers Council.

The regulatory review currently being undertaken will consider proposals on how to include kaumatua and elders in teacher registration requirements. No decision has been made on how this would be achieved.

These teacher registration requirements do not have to be met by parent and whānau-led services.

Professional development opportunities are available for teachers in teacher-led services through providers contracted by the Ministry of Education or professional development service providers, such as senior teachers in kindergartens.

In addition teacher-led services may offer courses or workshops for parents and whānau relevant to the education programme or parenting.

Ratios and centre size

There are requirements for higher adult:child ratios in playcentres and licence-exempt playgroups than the ratios required in other licensed sessional services. In playcentre every child under the age of 2 ½ must be accompanied by a parent or nominated caregiver, and adult child ratios for over 2’s are 1:5. In playgroups half the children attending must have a parent present. These ratios compare with regulated ratios of 1:5 for under 2’s and 1:8, 9:30, 31:45 or 46:50 for sessional centres.

A maximum centre size of 30 is allowed in playcentres. In other services a maximum centre size of 50 is allowed.

Age groupings and leadership

Parent and whānau-led services usually provide for babies, toddlers and young children, offering experiences for socialisation, caring and a family atmosphere. Köhanga reo emphasises children taking responsibility for support, caring and extending each other through tuakana-teina relationships. As part of the philosophy, leadership in köhanga reo is undertaken by all, including kaumatua, parents, whānau and children. In playcentre leadership is described as “emergent leadership” where adults are supported to move into leadership roles. In playgroups, leadership is largely exercised by some of the people in the playgroup, but without any “philosophy of leadership”, or external supporters. In Pasifika early childhood groups, church ministers and their wives often play leadership roles. Encouraging new parents and whānau to take on leadership roles is especially important in parent and whānau-led services where there is a turn-over of experienced members as children move on to school, and new members need to be brought on board to take on the considerable responsibilities.
Teacher-led services are variable in their age groupings. Kindergartens are only funded for over 2’s and many do not take children younger than 3 years. Education and care centres may be licensed for under 2’s only, over 2’s only, or mixed age range.

**Duration of attendance**

Ministry of Education statistics show that the average weekly enrolled hours for children’s attendance at licensed services in 2003 was:

- playcentre 4.3
- kindergarten 12.0
- education and care 18.6
- homebased 19.7
- kōhanga reo 28.5

Licence-exempt groups are permitted to operate for only 2 hours per day.

These figures indicate there is no difference between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services in respect to weekly enrolled hours. The differences are more marked between sessional and full day services.

**Professional and management support**

Kōhanga reo, playcentre and kindergarten have a strong support infrastructure offering professional, advisory, management and financial support provided by their national and regional bodies (Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust and purapura; New Zealand Playcentre Federation and playcentre associations; and affiliation to a national kindergarten organisation and kindergarten associations respectively). Many education and care centres and licence-exempt groups do not have such a level of hands-on support provided through a representative organisation. The Ministry of Education (and formerly ECD) provides limited support for licence-exempt groups.

**Fees and cost**

There are differences in fees payable according to whether the service is full day or sessional and the philosophy of the service. Most kindergartens do not charge fees, and playcentres and kindergartens do not charge fees or have low fee levels that are not compulsory. In full day services that employ paid staff, fees may be high to cover the costs of provision that are not met by other funding sources.

**Government funding and accountability**

There are differences between licensed and licence-exempt services in respect to funding and accountability. Licensed services, receive Ministry of Education bulk funding, and may be eligible for Equity Funding, discretionary grants and MSD childcare subsidies. They are reviewed by the Education Review Office (ERO), including the extent to which they are implementing the DOPs, especially DOPs 1-5 which focus on learning and development.
Licence-exempt services receive limited Ministry of Education funding and are not subject to ERO reviews.

**Summary of differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led and teacher-led services**

Defining characteristics of parent and whānau-led service are that parents and whānau attend with their children, and are responsible for providing the education programme and implementing the curriculum. In licensed parent and whānau-led services, parents and whānau undertake training and professional development. Most or all of these characteristics are present in many kōhanga reo, playcentres and licence-exempt groups, and some Pasifika services.

There are key **differences** between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services in the following:

- **Responsibility for the education programme.** Parents and whānau provide the education programme and implement the curriculum in many parent and whānau-led services. However, in some licensed kōhanga reo and Pasifika centres, parents may be unable to participate regularly in the education programme but contribute in other ways. Most parents and whānau are not paid as employees although some may receive a koha or honorarium. However, in some parent and whānau-led services, teachers/kaiako/supervisors/co-ordinators are employed to work alongside parents and whānau.

  Paid teachers/educators provide the education programme and implement the curriculum in teacher-led services. Pay rates vary.

- **Training and qualifications.** The New Zealand Playcentre Federation and Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust provide their own training for parents and whānau leading to service specific qualifications. These qualifications are registered on the New Zealand Qualifications Authority Framework, but are currently not approved for teacher registration by the New Zealand Teachers Council. Licence-exempt playgroups do not provide training leading to a qualification.

  Teachers in kindergartens are required to be registered teachers, and there is a staged plan for all regulated staff in other teacher-led services to be registered teachers by 2012, or for 70% to be registered teachers and up to 30% to be in training for a qualification approved for teacher registration by the New Zealand Teachers Council.

- **Professional development.** Many parents and whānau in playcentres and kōhanga reo take up opportunities to participate in courses, workshops and wananga. Licence-exempt groups may encourage parents and whānau to attend courses/workshops/wananga. Professional development is variable for these groups.
Professional development opportunities are available for teachers in teacher-led services through providers contracted by the Ministry of Education or service-specific providers, such as senior teachers in kindergartens. Teacher-led services may also offer courses or workshops for parents and whānau relevant to the education programme or parenting.

- **Ratios.** Adult:child ratios are required to be higher than the regulated ratios in some parent and whānau-led services (i.e. playcentres and licence-exempt groups).

- **Centre size.** Allowable centre size in playcentre is smaller than allowable centre size in other licensed services.

- **Leadership.** Playcentre emphasises emergent leadership, so that new people are supported to move into leadership roles. Leadership in kōhanga reo is undertaken by all including kaumatua, parents, whānau and children. Finding ways to encourage leadership to develop is especially important in parent and whānau-led services where there is turn over of experienced members as children move on to school, and new members need to be brought on board to take on the considerable responsibilities.

- **Age groupings.** Parent and whānau-led services usually provide for babies, toddlers and young children and emphasise taking responsibility for support, caring and extending each other through tuakana-teina relationships. The age groupings in teacher-led services depends on the service’s licence.

There are similarities and differences amongst parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services reflecting differences in their ownership, operation and service type rather than whether they are parent and whānau-led or teacher-led.

- **Responsibility for governance and management.** There are differences between community-based education and care centres, kindergartens, parent and whānau-led services and privately owned education and care centres. In the former, parents and whānau are responsible for governance and management. In the latter the owner has this responsibility.

- **Fees and cost.** There are differences in fees payable according to whether the service is full day or sessional and the philosophy of the service. Most kindergartens do not charge fees, and sessional parent and whānau-led services do not charge fees or have low fee levels that are not compulsory. In full day services that employ paid staff, fees may be high to cover the costs of provision that are not met by other funding sources.

- **Access to professional and management support.** There are differences in access to professional and management support according to whether the service is affiliated to an umbrella organisation providing such support. Kōhanga reo, playcentre and kindergartens have access to their own service-specific umbrella organisations.

There are similarities and differences among parent and whānau-led and services and teacher-led services reflecting whether they are licensed and chartered or licence-exempt.
• **Funding.** Licensed and chartered services receive government bulk funding, and may be eligible for Equity Funding, discretionary grants and MSD childcare subsidies. Licence-exempt services receive limited government funding.

• **Curriculum.** Licensed and chartered services operate under the Education (Early Childhood Education) Regulations and follow the Desirable Objectives and Practices. They are required to plan, implement and evaluate the curriculum based on the principles, strands and goals of Te Whāriki.

  Licence-exempt groups have minimal requirements for education programme provision, and health and safety. They are not required to follow the DOPs and do not base their programme on Te Whāriki.

• **ERO reviews.** Licensed services are subject to ERO reviews; licence-exempt services are not.

There are differences between all services according to their philosophy.

An issue identified through the regulatory review is whether to define parent and whānau-led services through their structure rather than their service type. This would provide clarification of what is meant by a parent and whānau-led service. Structure could include:

• professional and management support through an umbrella organisation, including support for emergent leadership;
• parents and whānau attending with their children;
• parents and whānau in combination holding approved qualifications;
• parents and whānau undertaking training and courses/workshops/wananga; and
• higher adult:child ratios than those regulated.
Section Eight

Differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services
Section Nine

Interviews with UK researchers

This section is based on data from interviews/discussions with UK researchers.

Features of UK playgroups

According to Ann Mooney, historically, playgroups and parent and toddler groups have been supplements to other early childhood education services in the UK, i.e. if there is no nursery education, playgroups have filled the gap. They tend to be in rural areas and meet for only one or a few sessions per week. Playgroups are declining because of the changing role of women. Parents’ preference is for nursery education, in part because many playgroups have to put out and pack up equipment at the beginning and end of a session. From May 1999, all 4 year-olds were granted a statutory entitlement to a free part-day nursery education place. Since then, there has been a dramatic fall in playgroup numbers.

Playgroups and Parent and Toddler groups involve parents in the care of their children, focus on learning through play, social interaction and promoting self-help, community development, and life-long learning.

Playgroups have to meet standards set out in the standards booklet “Sessional Care”. Davies, Statham and Carroll (2000) reported that playgroups score less well than providers of early years education on measures of quality such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale or inspections. They provided evidence of some excellent playgroups and some very poor playgroups and variable standards. However, they noted that playgroups have poorer resources and lower levels of qualified staff than providers of early years education, and often operate from insecure or inadequate premises where people have to put equipment away after use. They suggested that comparing playgroups with providers of early years education from an educational viewpoint only, may not do justice to the broader aims of playgroups to promote personal development and support families.

Playgroups are subject to registration and inspection by local authority social services departments. Playgroups providing funded educational places for 4-year-olds are inspected on educational aspects of provision. All playgroups must demonstrate they are working towards desirable outcomes for children’s learning. Some also use quality assurance mechanisms developed by their playgroup organisations.
Qualifications for playgroup leaders vary, with some holding no qualification.

Funding comes from a variety of sources and is described as reliant on parent fees, disjointed and ad hoc (Davies et al., 2000, p.15). There is usually a need for fund-raising.

Playgroup organisations, funded largely through grants and sponsorship, are the main providers of support and development for playgroups, undertaking such tasks as providing a network of staff to support and develop playgroups, organising training, and representing playgroups in planning forums.

In Wales, playgroups and parent and toddler groups have contributed to the increase in the number of Welsh speakers and to safeguarding the language, culture and tradition. Playgroups play an important role in rural communities. Mooney pointed out that rural areas often have lower levels of publicly funded services such as nursery education and local authority day nurseries.

One feature of playgroups is that they tend to enrol younger children, and the strong parental involvement feature suits this age group. It would be important in our study to examine roll characteristics.

Themes and issues

There were common themes arising from the discussions/interviews that are pertinent to the scoping phase questions, and issues that the UK researchers felt should be explored in our study. The themes came within 6 areas:

- Structural features of quality
- Indications of process quality
- Costing and funding
- Benefits for children
- Benefits for adults
- Benefits for community.

Structural features of quality

Differences between parent-led services and teacher-led services identified by the UK researchers related to structural features of quality.

Ratios of adults to children are often higher and centre sizes smaller in parent-led services.

The physical environment for playgroups is often poorer than for teacher-led services, with most playgroups operating in rented accommodation. Some had no or poor outdoor space and resources.

There was a suggestion that the turnover of educators may be higher in parent-led services than in teacher-led services.
Qualifications of playgroup leaders were portrayed as more variable and poorer than in teacher-led services. The quality of the playgroup leader was seen as having a vital influence on children’s learning, with poorly qualified teachers sometimes having a damaging impact on learning dispositions.

Some are terrible pedagogically – doing drawings for children and putting children off creative endeavours for life (Statham).

Most of the UK researchers expressed very strong concern that without appropriate training, parents will not be effective educators. The impact of unqualified educators working with children from families with low levels of education and/or skill was a particular concern, because of the potential to benefit or harm these children.

Pascal asserted that the evidence is unequivocal that “volunteer amateurs” are fine for middle class children, but not for children at risk of under-achievement. She felt concerned that a parent-led service might be all that is available for children of farm workers and from other low skilled backgrounds.

Blenkin said that in most playgroups, parents were poorly educated, and some were semi-literate. When parents in playgroups were asked what they wanted in the way of training, they sought low levels of training.

Training was regarded as a very important component by Roberts. She had some concerns about services being only parent-led because “they might not get above what ordinary parents know. Do they know what they don’t know?” Her preference was for a partnership between parents and practitioners without total reliance on changing parents into practitioners.

Interactions between children and adults

Pascal thought the relationships in parent-led services are likely to be different from relationships in teacher-led services because the adults have known the children for longer periods of time and possibly seen them in other community settings. This understanding may strengthen community development.

There may be deeper commitments to relationships but this commitment may create issues in respect to assessment. How is assessment done and by whom? There are ethical issues in parents being the educators that need to be worked through. Pascal questioned whether, when and how this working through occurs.

There may be be closer relationships in playgroups than in teacher-led services, characterised by warmth and care. Closer relationships may also be associated with conflict however.

Costing and funding

Davies, Statham and Carroll’s (2000) review considered costing and funding under two headings: funding for individual playgroups and funding for support and development of playgroups.
Outcomes for children

Benefits of parent-led services for children were identified particularly in respect to children’s well being and social benefits. Mooney noted the EPPE technical reports indicate that playgroups do better than many on social outcomes, but less well on cognitive outcomes. She thought this may have been affected by the wider variation in quality in playgroups compared with say nursery.

_Sense of belonging._ Children benefit through gaining a stronger sense of belonging from seeing their parents immersed in the setting (Roberts). Children gain a sense of security from home-like settings (Pascal). Playgroup is a more suitable environment for some children – easier pace, less stressful for some to be able to have a parent stay, and offers a more homely physical environment (Statham).

_Communication._ Conversations between parent and child have a different shape, because they can be based on shared memories. Not: “What did you do at nursery today?” Answer “Can’t remember” or “Nothing”. Rather, “Remember when . . . ” and “Tomorrow we could . . . ” There will be more commonalities between home and the early childhood setting (Roberts). Intergenerational links are made – parent and child both make friends with other parents and children (Statham).

_Language maintenance and revitalisation._ Statham identified the role of playgroups in language maintenance where these operated in the Welsh language.

Outcomes for parents

Outcomes for parents were identified in 5 areas: parents becoming knowledgeable about child development and learning, parents building up a supportive network of adults, and parents gaining confidence in their ability to learn.

_Becoming knowledgeable about child development and learning._ Such knowledge could influence parenting and be transferred beyond the home (Roberts). The provision of courses for parents through the Pre-school Learning Alliance supports parents’ learning (Mooney).

_Building a supportive network._ Parents get to know each other well, to understand and communicate with adults, and built up a more diverse network of adults (Roberts). Playgroup gives parents an entrée into their local community, into new networks. These networks grow and reform in ways that are helpful for community cohesion. Enduring friendships are made because of deep involvement in running the playgroup. Fund-raising activities put different people together in new ways (Statham).

_Confidence in ability to learn._ Parents may gain confidence in their approach and ability to learn that spills over into other parts of their lives (Roberts). Blenkin regarded it as beneficial that some parents in the Principles Into Practice project went on to become better qualified. Some were invited to contribute to Local Education Authority training provision. Parents became more
confident and their self-esteem improved. People from playgroups who presented their playgroup’s work found that others took them seriously, and they gained confidence from this.

*Providing care for children.* Mooney identified a benefit for parents as the collaborative relationships being formed with other services so that children can have full day care.

*Language maintenance and revitalisation.* Playgroup allows some parents who don’t have Welsh language to enter that language community (Statham).

**Outcomes for community**

*Linkages with community services.* Isolated parents can find out more about the community and filter information to allow them to find best-fit schools, doctors etc. Parents (and children) are linked to a range of services for children. This may include other early childhood education services, which parents usually say gives them and their children different things (Statham).

**Questions**

How do individual parents manage the dual role of being a pedagogic leader for a group and being a parent of their own child? How do children react to this? Do they see their own child in a different light?

Another policy question is: What is the line below which a playgroup should not be allowed to function (even when it might mean there is no early childhood education service in the community)?

New Zealand parent and whānau-led services appear to place a greater value on the capacity of parents, to educate their children. Playcentre and kōhanga reo have put in place a strong infrastructure of support for parent education and development that does not exist in the UK.
Section Ten

Conclusion

Characteristics of the operation of parent and whänau-led services

In this conclusion, we draw together the evidence and information described in previous sections about kohanga reo, playcentre, Pacific Islands early childhood education groups, ngā puna kōhungahunga, playgroups and community language groups to show the similarities and differences amongst these parent and whänau-led services (Table 1). We compare these services with teacher-led services.

We then use the material to identify and discuss outcomes that parent/whänau-led services are able to achieve, and the factors that seem to contribute to or hinder these outcomes. This is complex, because the various parent/whänau-led services are distinctive in their philosophy and kaupapa, their aims and goals, the way they operate, and their levels of infrastructural support. They are not a uniform group. Where outcomes are only applicable to some services, or there is likely to be variation, we identify this.
The information in this table is drawn from the key informant interviews and documentation from the various parent and whānau-led services and Ministry of Education.

Table 2  **Characteristics of the operation of parent and whānau-led early childhood services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of operation</th>
<th>Kōhanga reo</th>
<th>Playcentre</th>
<th>Licence-exempt services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| There are clearly articulated philosophies and goals underpinning the service | A strong kaupapa underpins the operation and educational programme. This is reflected in the following four pou or posts which are cornerstones to the kaupapa:  
  • Total immersion in te reo Māori.  
  • Whānau decision making, management and responsibility.  
  • Accountability.  
  • Health and wellbeing of the mokopuna and whānau. | A strong philosophy underpins the operation and educational programme. The New Zealand Playcentre Federation’s mission statement is “Quality early childhood education – a co-operative family/whānau experience. This mission is fulfilled by:  
  • providing an early childhood education option for whānau/families through the operation of playcentres;  
  • providing a participatory adult education programme for parents/caregivers/whānau or families that emphasises self-help and personal development;  
  • providing educational publications and resources primarily to enable Playcentre members to enhance their parenting skills and train towards gaining their early childhood care and education qualifications. (New Zealand Playcentre Federation Vision Document, October 1999). | Nga pura kōhungahunga, Pasifika services and community language groups are based on heritage language and culture. Playgroups do not have a clearly articulated philosophy |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of operation</th>
<th>Köhanga reo</th>
<th>Playcentre</th>
<th>Licence-exempt services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance and programme provision</td>
<td>Parents and whānau lead, govern, manage and provide the programme</td>
<td>Parents and whānau lead, govern, manage and provide the educational programme</td>
<td>Parents and whānau lead, govern, manage and provide the educational programme of the service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership roles can be undertaken by all including children</td>
<td>There is an emergent leadership style aimed at supporting parents to move into leadership roles at centre, association and Federation level</td>
<td>Leadership is variable and changes depending on the characteristics of the member parents In Pasifika services, church ministers and their wives can play a leadership role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Education Review Office reviews Accountable to parents and whānau Ministry of Education returns</td>
<td>Education Review Office reviews Accountable to parents and whānau Ministry of Education returns</td>
<td>Accountable to parents and whānau Minimal Ministry of Education returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Whāriki and programme provision</td>
<td>Provide an educational programme in te reo based on tikanga Māori and Te Whāriki</td>
<td>Provide an educational programme based on the principles and strands of Te Whāriki as required in the DOPs for chartered early childhood services</td>
<td>Programme based on the provision of activities and equipment rather than Te Whāriki Some programmes are based on heritage language and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education opportunities</td>
<td>Provide a range of parent and whānau education and development opportunities Strong emphasis on learning te reo and tikanga Māori</td>
<td>Provide a range of parent education and development opportunities</td>
<td>Parent information provided through periodic workshops, discussion with individual parents and written information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of operation</td>
<td>Köhanga reo</td>
<td>Playcentre</td>
<td>Licence-exempt services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Parenting skills and knowledge | Emphasis on parent and whānau education to raise understanding of child development and learning  
Ongoing learning through whānau-based programmes | Strong emphasis on parent education to raise understanding of child development and learning  
Ongoing learning through playcentre association courses | Emphasis on parent education to raise understanding of child development and behaviour management. Workshops based on needs and interests of group |
| Training and qualification structures | Formal training and qualification structure  
Training and qualification structure provided through Te Köhanga National Trust | Formal training and qualification structure  
Training and qualifications structure provided through Playcentre Federation | No formal training and qualification structure |
| Support structures | Financial, management and professional support provided through Te Köhanga National Trust, āpa, āwi and whānau including kaumātua. Wananga are provided with assistance from Ministry of Education professional development contracts | Financial, management and professional support provided through the NZ Playcentre Federation, playcentre associations, Ministry of Education contracted playcentre professional development advisors and outside facilitators | Most financial, management and professional support is provided by Ministry of Education co-ordinators. Support is variable and depends on whether the group is newly established or on the identified needs of the member parents |
| Structural framework for operation | All are chartered to the National Trust and most are licensed  
Te Köhanga National Trust is chartered to the Ministry of Education on behalf of the individual köhanga reo | Most are licensed and chartered  
The NZ Playcentre Federation has a licensing agreement with the Ministry of Education which sets out their ratio and qualification requirements | Not licensed or chartered  
Few regulatory requirements. Requirements relate to ratios and health and safety  
Pasifika services have a focus on becoming licensed and chartered |
### Characteristics of operation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paid educators</th>
<th>Köhanga reo</th>
<th>Playcentre</th>
<th>Licence-exempt services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Köhanga reo</strong></td>
<td>Usually kaiako are paid educators</td>
<td>Some playcentres have a paid supervisor working alongside parent educators</td>
<td>Some groups have a paid co-ordinator who provides activities for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure of supervision</strong></td>
<td>Generally kaiako. Parents, whānau and kaumātua may offer supervision, although many parents and whānau are not able to participate with the children on a regular basis during the day because of work commitments or limited competency in te reo Māori, making them feel whakamā or embarrassed. Older children scaffold younger children</td>
<td>Supervision teams of parents are rostered to take responsibility for a session</td>
<td>Parents have overall supervision role in most groups. Where a co-ordinator is employed, parents are still involved with supervision of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Venue/premises and location</strong></td>
<td>Accessible in local community</td>
<td>Accessible in local community</td>
<td>Accessible in local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most have exclusive premises</td>
<td>Most have exclusive premises</td>
<td>Many without exclusive premises. Must set up and store equipment when not in use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most rural kōhanga reo are marae-based</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours and regularity of operation</strong></td>
<td>All have full-day licences and operate five days a week</td>
<td>Sessional services Licensed for particular days and hours. Days and hours vary. Rural playcentres may have seasonal variations to their operation</td>
<td>Sessional services Days and hours vary Rural groups may have seasonal variations to their operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of operation</td>
<td>Köhanga reo</td>
<td>Playcentre</td>
<td>Licence-exempt services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed age groups</td>
<td>Babies, toddlers and young children are welcomed and involved</td>
<td>Babies, toddlers and young children are welcomed and involved</td>
<td>Babies, toddlers and young children are welcomed and involved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Cost to parents and whānau  | Fees are paid by many parents. Other forms of whānau contribution and kōha are accepted  
Parents and whānau are involved in fundraising | There is a fee/donation system operating  
Parents and whānau are involved in fundraising | Not costly for parents. Usually no fee for attendance  
Parents and whānau may be involved in fundraising |
| Funding                      | Ministry of Education bulk funding  
May be eligible for Equity Funding and MSD childcare subsidy | Ministry of Education bulk funding  
May be eligible for Equity Funding and MSD childcare subsidy | Ministry of Education funding at a low rate |
Differences and similarities between parent and whānau-led and teacher-led services

Differences and similarities and between parent and whānau-led and teacher-led services are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3  Differences and similarities and between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key differences between parent and whānau-led and teacher-led services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility for the education programme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and whānau provide the education programme and attend with their children in parent and whānau-led services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid teachers/educators provide the education programme in teacher-led services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training and qualifications</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and whānau in kōhanga reo and playcentre are trained in kōhanga reo and playcentre programmes respectively. Parents and whānau have a high level of commitment to such training. Licence-exempt playgroups do not provide training leading to a qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in teacher-led services are trained through external training provision, except for services within an umbrella organisation such as Rudolf Steiner and Montessori. All kindergarten teachers are required to be registered teachers. By 2012, 100% of regulated staff in teacher-led services will need to be registered teachers or 70% will need to be registered teachers and up to 30% in training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many parents and whānau in kōhanga reo and playcentre participate in courses, workshops and wananga, development through Ministry of Education professional development contracts, or their umbrella organisation. Licence-exempt groups have periodic workshops and generally infrequent access to professional advice. Professional development provision is variable for these parents and whānau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers/educators/kaiako in licensed and chartered teacher-led services have access to professional development through Ministry of Education professional development contracts, or their own umbrella organisation. Some teacher-led services offer periodic courses for parents and whānau relevant to the education programme or parenting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ratios</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult:child ratios are required to be higher than the regulated ratios in playcentres and licence-exempt groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centre size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowable centre size in playcentre is smaller than in other licensed and chartered services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding ways to support and encourage new leaders to emerge is especially important in parent and whānau-led services where there is turn-over of experienced members and new members need to take on considerable responsibilities. Kōhanga reo and playcentre have philosophies and practices to support all members to be leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Groups</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed age groups in parent and whānau-led services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pay and conditions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most parent and whānau-led service educators are unpaid volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most teachers in teacher-led services are employed under an employment agreement, but pay rates vary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Similarities and differences reflecting ownership, operation and service type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities and differences reflecting ownership, operation and service type</th>
<th>Parent governance and management</th>
<th>Fees and cost</th>
<th>Infrastructure support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent governance and management</td>
<td>Similar in parent and whānau-led and community-based teacher-led services. Parent and whānau representatives in community-based teacher-led services may also be involved in employing teachers. Limited involvement for parents and whānau in governance and management in private education and care services.</td>
<td>Differences in fees payable relate to whether the service is full-day or sessional and the philosophy of the service.</td>
<td>Köhanga reo, playcentre and kindergarten have well-developed infrastructures for professional and management support. Support for licence-exempt groups and education and care centres varies depending on their chosen affiliations. Limited support for licence-exempt groups from ECD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Similarities and differences reflecting licensing status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Licensed and chartered services receive Ministry of Education bulk funding, may be eligible for Equity Funding and MSD childcare subsidy. Licence-exempt groups receive Ministry of Education funding at a much lower rate than bulk funding. Some extra funding is available for newly established licence-exempt groups.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Te Whāriki and DOP is the basis for the education programme in all licensed and chartered services. Not generally followed in licence-exempt services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Licensed and chartered services are subject to Education Review Office (ERO) reviews and are accountable to their parent community. Licence-exempt groups are accountable to their parent community and Ministry of Education. No ERO involvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcomes of parent and whānau-led services

The potential outcomes which the scoping material has identified for parent and whānau-led services are summarised under the three categories: children’s education and learning outcomes; outcomes for parents; and outcomes for community. These are represented in Table 3 below.
Table 4  Outcomes of parent and whānau-led services for children, parents and whānau/community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes for children</th>
<th>Outcomes for parents</th>
<th>Outcomes for whānau/community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions, and sense of identity.</td>
<td>Parenting skills and knowledge of child learning and development</td>
<td>Weaving people together and connecting them with relevant social and community networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills and knowledge through taking responsibility for service provision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowerment and enhanced self-esteem as an adult through being encouraged, affirmed and mentored to learn skills and develop understanding, and use these for the benefit of the service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich communication, sense of belonging and extended learning experiences through connectedness between home and parent and whānau-led service</td>
<td>Greater confidence in role as parents</td>
<td>Strengthening community and cultural identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater confidence in ability to learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents and whānau become advocates for their own and others’ children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn and understand te reo and tikanga Māori and develop a sense of cultural identity (kōhanga and puna)</td>
<td>Knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori, and a sense of cultural identity (kōhanga and puna)</td>
<td>Parent and whānau decision making, management and responsibility for providing a community facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn their heritage language and culture, and develop a sense of cultural identity (PIECGs and community language groups)</td>
<td>Knowledge of heritage language and culture and a sense of cultural identity (PIECGs and community language groups)</td>
<td>Strengthening te reo and tikanga Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have learning opportunities provided at home</td>
<td>Parents and whānau appreciate opportunity to educate their own and other children in a group setting</td>
<td>A focal point in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babes, toddlers and young children develop socialisation and caring skills by being educated together</td>
<td>Reducing social isolation through building supportive networks</td>
<td>Families linking with health, welfare, educational services and community organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents and whānau may have time away from own child for leisure, training, voluntary or paid work opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with special needs develop a sense of belonging through being welcomed and included in the service</td>
<td>Developing friendships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing to community development</td>
<td>Contributing to community development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children have learning opportunities provided at home

Parents and whānau appreciate opportunity to educate their own and other children in a group setting

Reducing social isolation through building supportive networks

Parents and whānau may have time away from own child for leisure, training, voluntary or paid work opportunities

Families linking with health, welfare, educational services and community organisations

Contributing to community development

Contributing to community development

Rich communication, sense of belonging and extended learning experiences through connectedness between home and parent and whānau-led service

Greater confidence in role as parents

Greater confidence in ability to learn

Parents and whānau become advocates for their own and others’ children

Reducing cultural isolation

Parent and whānau decision making, management and responsibility for providing a community facility

Strengthening te reo and tikanga Māori

A focal point in the community

Families linking with health, welfare, educational services and community organisations

Contributing to community development

Contributing to community development

Knowledge of heritage language and culture and a sense of cultural identity (PIECGs and community language groups)

Reducing cultural isolation

Parent and whānau decision making, management and responsibility for providing a community facility

Strengthening te reo and tikanga Māori

A focal point in the community

Families linking with health, welfare, educational services and community organisations

Contributing to community development

Contributing to community development
Outcomes for children

**Knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions, sense of identity and wellbeing**

Farquhar’s (2002) best evidence synthesis of “quality teaching early foundations” described learning outcomes and how they are strengthened as follows:

- Attention is paid here to children as emergent learners. It is recognised that children’s learning outcomes are strengthened when teachers view cognitive development, social development and physical development as complementary.

- Learning outcomes include knowledge and understanding, skills, and attitudes alongside the development of dispositions to learning. Cultural identity and children developing a sense of belonging, contribution and wellbeing are important. Children’s capacities for communication and exploration are also key considerations when looking at the outcomes of early childhood experiences for children (Farquhar, 2002, p.13).

She noted that these outcomes highlight the richness of learning that occurs during the early childhood period and the complexity for teachers.

The material from parent and whānau-led key informants, and information about the services, indicate that each service, while wanting a “good” early childhood education, had a different emphasis on the outcomes of particular value to them. Kōhanga reo and playcentre follow the curriculum framework of Te Whāriki. Kōhanga reo pointed out that Te Whāriki was based on a philosophical framework developed by Dr Tamati Reedy and Mrs Tilly Reedy for Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust. Playcentre key informants emphasised the value of the curriculum framework for playcentre.

Licence-exempt playgroups are not required to follow the Desirable Objectives and Practices. It is unlikely that participants in playgroups would gain theoretical or practical understanding of Te Whāriki through playgroup participation. Playgroups place particular emphasis on socialisation benefits for children.

Outcomes kōhanga reo seek for children are spiritual, cultural, social and educational. The quality, depth and usage of te reo Māori, of cultural interactions and of relationships (elders and elders, elders and parents, elders and kaiako, parents and kaiako, parents and parents, kaiako and kaiako) within the kōhanga and home combine to foster a strong sense of cultural identity, belonging, and wellbeing. The concept of tuakana/teina concept of scaffolding, extending, encouraging is important.

Ngā puna kōhungahunga, community language groups and Pasifika playgroups emphasise their heritage language and culture.
Rich communication, sense of belonging, extended learning experiences from connectedness between home and early childhood service

Children benefit when the home and early childhood centre build on and support each other in the interests of children. Learning at home and in the service can be reinforced where parents are also the educators, because parents know their children well, can build on their interests in both settings and take a consistent approach to learning and behaviour from one setting to the other. Communication between parents and children about the early childhood experience may be deeper when parent and child share the early childhood experience. Both can discuss memories in a deeper way, and use memories to plan and predict. Seeing their parents immersed in the setting gives children a strong sense of belonging.

Children learn and understand te reo and tikanga Māori. Children learn their heritage language and culture. Children develop a sense of cultural identity.

In kōhanga reo and ngā puna kōhungahunga, children learn and understand te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. Their sense of cultural identity is strengthened.

In Pasific Islands early childhood groups and community language playgroups children learn and understand their heritage language and culture. Their sense of cultural identity is strengthened.

Children have learning opportunities provided at home

Parents who have undertaken training and professional development within the early childhood service, have a greater understanding of how to promote learning, and provide more educational experiences and resources for their children at home.

Babies, toddlers and young children develop socialisation and caring skills by being educated together

Provision for mixed ages and a family atmosphere is an important philosophy for all these services. Caring for others and children supporting and extending each other through tuakana/teina support are values that can be given emphasis in such settings.

Parent and whānau-led services cater for babies and toddlers as well as young children. Many teacher-led services are not licensed for under-two-year-olds and where they are licensed, there are often waiting lists for babies and toddlers. Some provision for babies and toddlers is of poor quality in teacher-led services.

Parent and whānau-led services cater for these younger age ranges in an environment where parents are welcomed and involved.
Children with special educational needs develop a sense of belonging

While not raised by New Zealand participants, Davies, Statham and Carroll (2000) noted the role of UK playgroups in providing a welcoming environment for children with special educational needs, and opportunities for early identification of such needs.

Do opportunities to access specialist services depend on level of isolation and community connectedness of the group leader?

Outcomes for parents

Parenting skills and knowledge of child learning and development
Parent education and training is an essential feature of playcentre and kōhanga reo and a very strong emphasis is placed on this. Education and training raises awareness and understanding of children’s learning and development, and this understanding is likely to transfer to the adults’ interactions with the child at home, with benefits for both child and adult.

Skills and knowledge through responsibility for service provision
Knowledge and skills learned through taking on responsibilities and leadership roles enhance parents’ own development. Skills learned through such experiences may be transferable.

Empowerment and enhanced self-esteem as an adult
Parents and whānau are empowered to participate and many gain in confidence, self-esteem and well-being. This in turn can be beneficial for their children.

Greater confidence in role as parents. Greater confidence in ability to learn
Participation in training and parenting courses, opportunity to practice and extend skills and knowledge within a supportive environment, and to see other educators in action contribute to greater confidence in the parenting role and as learners.

Parents and whānau become advocates for their own and others’ children
Parents and whānau become advocates for children as they come to regard themselves as responsible for all the children in the setting.

Knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori
The strong focus and support for learning and speaking of te reo Māori by adults and children is a strength in kōhanga reo. Learning and a sense of cultural identity is an outcome for parents.

In Pasifika early childhood groups and ngā puna kōhungahunga a similar outcome in respect to their heritage language is expected.
Parents and whānau as educators

Parents and whānau appreciate the opportunities to educate their own and other children in an early childhood setting.

Reducing social isolation

Parent and whānau-led services help to break down social isolation for parents. The playgroup movement began specifically in rural and urban areas where isolation for parents of young children was an identified issue.

Time for other activities

Parents and whānau may take up opportunities while their child is in the early childhood service to participate in external activities.

Developing friendships

The friendships formed between parents and those participating in parent and whānau-led services are important at the time, and may endure. The structure of operation of kōhanga reo, ngā puna kōhungahunga and Pasifika early childhood groups invites inter-generational involvement and participation. Collective responsibility is taken for all children and people are committed to each other.

Whānau and community outcomes

Biddulph, Biddulph and Biddulph (2003, p.15) defined community as

a relatively stable network of relationships among a group of people who have common interests, a network from which they draw support, friendship and a sense of identity or connectedness greater than that provided in a family alone. From a societal perspective, it is communities (and families) that create and preserve social cohesion.

Our analysis of each of the parent and whānau-led services identified ways in which they strengthened community connectedness, and the perceived benefits to community, whānau, parents and children from enhanced community relationships.

Weaving people together and connecting them with relevant social and community networks

Parent and whānau-led services have a special place in the community – they weave together parents and whānau and others who have a common interest in young children and families, and in the kaupapa or philosophy of the service. The group of people who come together in this way is often wider than is possible in a teacher-led service because these services actively involve all parents and whānau in responsibility for running the service, providing the education programme and decision-making.
In kōhanga reo, kaumatua have an essential role in supporting, guiding and caring for the mokopuna as well as their parents.

Pasifika early childhood groups are often supported by church ministers and their wives, elders and others in the community. Ngā puna kōhungahunga draw on kaumatua and community language groups draw on speakers of their heritage language.

In these services where the kaupapa and philosophy is to revitalise and maintain language and culture, bringing together of people occurs across generations.

**Strengthening community and cultural identity**

A sense of community identity is strengthened through belonging to a parent and whānau-led early childhood service because the service brings together many people from within the community for a common purpose.

In kōhanga reo, ngā puna kōhungahunga and Pasifika early childhood groups, cultural identity is strengthened.

**Parent and whānau decision making, management and responsibility for providing a community facility**

The total running of the service by parents and whānau contributes a valuable community service.

**A focal point in the community**

Parent and whānau-led services may be the only early childhood education service available in some communities, providing them with an important focal point. Ministry of Education statistics show that there are a much higher percentage of these services in rural communities. At 1 January 2002, 196 playcentres (38%), 174 playgroups (32%), and 157 kōhanga reo (28%) were in rural locations compared with 11 home-based services (7%), 67 education and care centres (4%) and 14 kindergartens (2%).

**Linking families with health, welfare and educational services and community organisations**

Access is provided through parent and whānau-led services to a range of community services – such as other early childhood education services, Plunket, libraries, specialists, welfare, local schools, church groups, and government agencies. The participation of parents and whānau in running the service means that there is a more direct linkage by each family than may be possible in teacher-led services. Parents may find their needs are met through using more than one early childhood education service.
**Strengthening te reo and tikanga Māori**

Kōhanga reo plays a very significant role in New Zealand society in the maintenance and revitalisation of te reo and tikanga Māori, and in generating greater visibility of te reo Māori in the community. Kōhanga reo provides teachers of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori to the community. The development of kōhanga reo has created a need for parallel development of kura kaupapa Māori in New Zealand communities.

**Contributing to community development**

There is anecdotal evidence that those participating in parent and whānau-led services become involved in leadership roles within their child’s school and other community organisations, such as serving on the school board of trustees, on local bodies, and taking on leadership roles with respect to community issues.

**Representation of the framing conditions impacting on the learning environment for parent and whānau-led services.**

As a result of gathering the material for this report, we adapted a diagram, originally from Siraj–Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden, & Bell (2002), of a parent and whānau-led service learning environment that we provided in our proposal to undertake this research. This demonstrates spheres of influence, starting at the centre with child/parents “pedagogical interactions” (child-child, adult-adult, adult–child interactions within the service, including language interactions for kōhanga reo, Pasifika playgroups and community language playgroups). The next sphere is “pedagogical framing” – conditions within the service itself that contribute to the learning environment for adults and children, including service philosophy and goals, adults’ knowledge in a range of relevant domains, space and equipment, and processes to support the education programme. An outer sphere comprises external conditions in the community that may support the service and contribute to outcomes. The model is comparable to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) model that suggests how children’s development takes place within nested systems that enable learning processes to occur.
Section Ten
Conclusion

Figure 1 Framing conditions impacting on quality of learning environment for parent/whānau led services

- **Pedagogical Framing**
  - Te Whāriki
    - Reflective practice involving whole ece services community

- **External Framing Conditions**
  - and Social Cohesion
  - Relationships with schools, kura, health services, iwi, church organizations, ece services

- **Pedagogical Experiences**
  - Child/parents
  - Social support

- **External Framing Conditions**
  - and Social Cohesion
  - Philosophy, aspirations, and values
  - Whānau/parents knowledge of pedagogy
  - Whānau/parents knowledge of children
  - Whānau/parents knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori
  - Whānau/parents knowledge of Pacific culture, language, and values

- **Societal valuing of parents and whānau as educators of their children**

- **Support from outside professionals**
  - TRKN, ECD, Kaumatua, PC Association, and Federation, community organizations

- **Responsibility for managing & running service**
- **Collective responsibility for children**
- **Capability**
- **Assessment and Evaluation**
- **Planning**
- **Equipment and materials**
- **Development of behaviour routines for collaborative play**
- **Use of Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori**
- **Use of Pacific language and culture**

- **Induction**
  - Emergent leadership
  - Premises
  - Tūakana-teina relationships

- **Use of Te reo Māori and Tikanga Māori**

- **Responsibility for managing & running services**
- **Access to specialist services**
Conditions that may hinder parent and whānau-led services from achieving outcomes

In this section, we outline conditions that may hinder services from achieving outcomes.

**Falling rolls and services of small size.**
These services are likely to be less viable financially, the volunteer workload to be more onerous (because there is a smaller pool to draw on), and the concept of emergent leadership to be more difficult to enact because it relies on new people being available to take on roles.

**Turnover of parent leaders and educators**
Key informants have said that “all” are/can be involved in leadership. Emergent leadership and the quality of the educational programme are likely to be influenced by turnover of leaders and educators. How are issues related to turnover addressed? What factors influence turnover? Does the mixed or young age range influence turnover?

**Training and qualifications.**
There is considerable research evidence of a strong link between the training of staff and the quality of early childhood education services. In particular, staff who have specialised early childhood education training and more years of formal education, provide more stimulating, warm and supportive interactions that benefit children. Smith et al. (2000) noted training can also weed out people who are unsuitable for teaching, while those who have a gift for working with children can be trained to understand how children develop and are influenced by their environment. The take-up of training, professional development and parent education in settings, and the quality of this provision is likely to impact on quality.

Playgroups and ngā puna kōhunghahunga are less well supported than playcentre and kōhanga reo in opportunities for professional support, training and education. Through the parent profile we will explore the voluntary and work experiences and education and qualification backgrounds of parents to establish which parents engage in training and qualifications of the parent-led service. Do all parents take up the opportunities or particular group(s) of parents? Are there differences in take-up between services?

**Rurality and isolation**
Rurality and isolation have implications for parental access to a range of early childhood education services, and access to professional and management support and resources. Issues associated with rurality may include difficulties accessing professional development, low roll numbers, resourcing pressures, travel distances, isolation, seasonal employment, changing rural communities and low socio-economic status, accessing specialist support for children and families.
Access to infrastructure.

Associations and the Playcentre Federation provide infrastructure support to playcentres. The usage and value of this support is likely to impact on quality. Playgroups are much more variable and less well established.
References


Appendix 1: Key informant interviews

NOTE: Specify service type(s) from list according to what is the key informant's service type.

**Philosophy/kaupapa**

1. How would you describe the philosophy/kaupapa of playcentre/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups.
   
   Prompt: use the word "purpose" instead of philosophy or kaupapa.

2. What do playcentres/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups really value?

3. What are playcentres/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups trying to achieve?
   
   Prompts: for children, for parents and whānau, for community

4. If you could prioritise three things you hope all children learn from your ECE services, what would these be? (Prompts: e.g. domains of knowledge, attitudes, dispositions, skills, te reo Māori, Pasifika language).
   
   And what three things would you hope your own child would learn from these services?

5. What do you think are some key reasons why parents/caregivers/whānau decide to use playcentre/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups?
Teacher-led services, like kindergartens and many education and care centres, employ and pay teachers to be responsible for the children and for providing the programme.

What do you think are the main areas of difference between parent/whānau-led services and teacher-led services?

What are the main areas of similarity?

Prompts: values, funding, ideas about what is important for children, ideas about what is important for adults, ideas about what is important for community, the education programme.

Role and involvement of parents and whānau

What is the role of parents and whānau in your service?

In what ways are parents and whānau involved in playcentres/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups? Probe for each: How does your service assist parents/caregivers and whānau to be involved?

Prompts:

In children’s learning

In adults’ own learning

In management and running the service

In supporting each other

In linking with community organisations and services

What factors influence parent and whānau involvement? Probe for each: How do these factors influence involvement? Prompts:

• Other responsibilities/commitments that detract from involvement
• Pressure from the service to be involved
• Workload within the service
• Length of time family has been in the service
• Confidence
• Interest
• Revitalising language and culture
• Maintenance of language and culture
• Not knowing te reo (for kōhanga reo)
• Not knowing Pasifika language (for Pasifika)
• Transport
What other practices could help parents and whānau to be involved?

10 What do you think are some main reasons why some playcentres/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups strongly involve parents and whānau?

11 What do you think are some main reasons why some playcentres/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups do not strongly involve parents and whānau?

What is “good quality” in a parent and whānau-led service?

12 If you were in a good quality playcentre/ Pasifika education and care centre/ Pasifika language group/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroup/ playgroup what would you expect to see?

13 How do you characterise the relationships and practices in good quality playcentres/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups? Prompts:

- Adults: children
- Children: children
- Adults: adults
- With home
- With other kōhanga/ECE services
- With ECE bodies providing support e.g. Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust Board, Associations, Ministry of Education including former ECD
- With local schools
- With local community organisations?
- With government departments/ agencies?

14 What are the things that help playcentres/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ Pasifika language groups/ community language playgroups/ playgroups provide good quality?

Leadership

15 How does leadership operate in playcentres/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups?

Who provides leadership?

16 Who takes responsibility or takes on a regular role for children's learning?

What sort of support is given to these people?
Are there any restrictions about who can work with children?

17 Who takes responsibility for adults’ learning?
   How does this happen? When does it happen?
   What sort of support is given to these people?

18 Why do some parent and whānau-led services employ and pay staff?

19 What difference does employing paid staff make?

20 Why do some parent and whānau-led services employ and pay parents/whānau?

21 What difference does employing paid parents/whānau make?

Outcomes

22 What outcomes do you think playcentres/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community language playgroups/ playgroups achieve?
   Prompts: outcomes for children, outcomes for parents and whānau, outcomes for community
   How does your service achieve these outcomes?
   What external support could assist your service to achieve these outcomes?

23 Have you any evidence about outcomes from playcentre/ Pasifika education and care centres/ Pasifika language groups/ kōhanga reo/ ngā puna kohungahunga/ community playgroups/ playgroups. (Collect any material).

24 How do you think parent and whānau-led services fit within government goals for children, parents and whānau/communities?

25 How do you see quality in your service being improved?

NOTE: Collect figures on participation from Ministry of Education
       Collect documentation from national and umbrella organisations in advance.
Appendix 2: Key informant interview questions: government officials

Goals and aspirations
1. What are the goals and aspirations of the different parent/whānau-led services?
   - Playcentre
   - Kōhanga reo
   - Playgroups (community language, general, Pasifika, naga puna kohungahunga)
   - Pasifika centres

Participation
2. What do you think are key reasons why children/parents/caregivers/whānau participate in parent and whānau-led services?

Government goals
3. What are the government’s goals for children/parents/and whānau/communities that are relevant to parent and whānau-led services?

Comparison with teacher-led services
4. What do you think are the key areas of difference between parent and whānau-led services and teacher-led services? What are the areas of similarity?

Quality
5. If you were in a good quality parent and whānau-led service what would you expect to see or hear?
6. How would you characterise the relationships and practices in good quality parent and whānau-led services?
7. What interactions are occurring in parent and whānau-led services between:
   - adults and adults
   - adults and children
   - children and children
   - services (other ECE services, ECE bodies providing support)
   - services and external agencies and organisations

**Involvement**
8. What is the nature of parent and whānau involvement in parent and whānau-led services?
9. What is the range of involvement in parent and whānau-led services?
10. What factors influence the range and nature of involvement?

**Leadership**
11. Who provides leadership and how does it operate in respect to:
   - children’s learning
   - adults’ learning
   - the service?
12. Do you think there should be restrictions in who should work with children in parent and whānau-led services?

**Outcomes**
13. What do you know about the outcomes being achieved in parent/whānau-led services for:
   - children
   - parents and whānau
   - community
14. What external support (professional, management, structural) could assist parent and whānau-led services achieve these outcomes?
15. How do you see quality in parent and whānau-led services being improved?