



Hours of participation in early childhood education

The average number of hours children spend in early childhood education services continues to increase

Indicator Description

Average number of hours spent in early childhood education services.

Why This Is Important

Measures of participation need to capture information not only on enrolment, but also on the amount of time spent each week in each early childhood education (ECE) setting. Time spent in early childhood education enhances future learning. Total time spent in early childhood education has been found to have a significant association with achievement at age 8 and age 10 (associated with cognitive competence score including

literacy, mathematics and logical problem-solving measures) for children in the Competent Children Study (Wylie, C. *et al* 2001). Significant associations with mathematics and logical problem-solving continued to age 12 (Wylie, C. *et al* 2004).

A number of family factors influence the amount of time that a child spends in early childhood education. There are varying levels of evidence about what length of time is best in different circumstances for infants, toddlers or young children in early childhood education. In addition, the quality of the service and the level of staff qualifications are also linked to the experiences and opportunities available to children.

How We Are Going

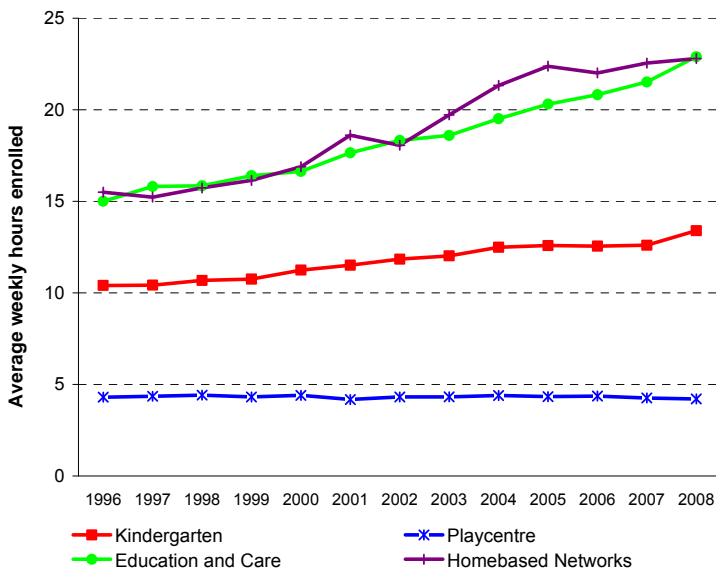
Since 1996, the number of hours children are enrolled in ECE services has on average increased across all services, except playcentres where the average hours enrolled have remained relatively stable at just over four hours per week. Data on licensed te kohanga reo is not collected.

Enrolments in home-based networks had in recent years been for the longest number of hours, however, enrolments in education and care services have now caught up. In one year alone, from 2007 to 2008, average hours at education and care services grew by 1.4 hours per child per week.

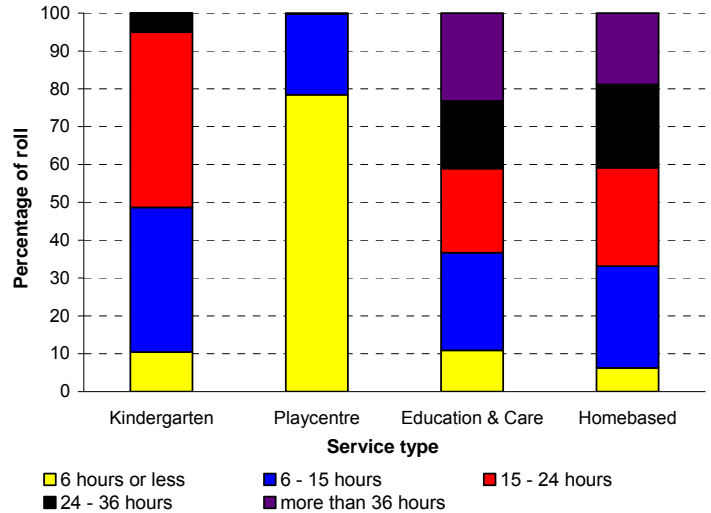
Both these types of services have had the largest growth in average hours spent in ECE by service since 1996, with 47% growth for home-based networks and a 53% increase for education and care services.

Over the same time period, there has also been a large increase in the number of enrolments for both these services, with a 99% increase in enrolments for home-based networks (13,065 enrolments in 2008) and a 70% increase for education and care services (97,756 enrolments in 2008). In contrast, enrolments in other types of services have decreased.

Average weekly hours attended for children at licensed early childhood education services by type of service (1996 to 2008)



Percentage of roll in early childhood education services, by hours enrolled per week and service type (2008)

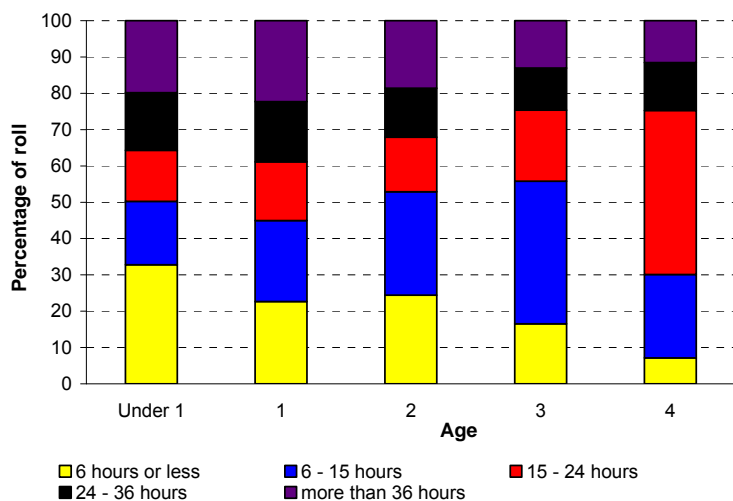


There is insufficient robust research evidence to draw strong conclusions about how long children should attend any particular type of ECE service to benefit from ECE. Overseas research suggests that children attending over six hours a week of ECE tend to have better outcomes from early years of schooling.

In 2008, 83.6% of New Zealand children enrolled in an ECE service attended for at least six hours a week, with 55.1% of children attending between 6 and 24 hours. Home-based networks and education and care services tended to have a large proportion of children attending for more hours per week; 41% of enrolled children attended for 24 hours or more per week. The opposite is true with playcentres where over 78% of enrolled children attend for six hours or less per week.

Children aged two and under had the highest proportion of enrolments for both six hours or less, or 36 or more hours in ECE. This implies two different types of service are required for the younger children.

Percentage of roll in early childhood education services, by hours enrolled and age (2008)



Where To Find Out More

To obtain further information about participation at early childhood education services, consider indicators:

- Waiting times for early childhood education
- Prior participation in early childhood education: new entrants
- Participation in early childhood education.

The Ministry of Education has established an Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis Programme to systematically identify, evaluate, analyse, synthesise and make accessible, relevant evidence linked to a range of learner outcomes. Evidence about what works for this indicator can be found in:

- Quality Teaching Early Foundations: Best Evidence Synthesis.

References

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