Participation in Early Childhood Education

What we have found

The percentage of Pasifika new school entrants who have participated in early childhood education (ECE) services has increased over the last six years. While Pasifika rates have increased more than those of all other ethnic groups since 2000, Pasifika continue to have the lowest participation rate of the ethnic groups.

Based on the improved participation rate for Pasifika new school entrants since 2000, the forecast position for 2010 is that Pasifika participation will improve considerably to 88.5 percent. This is short of its target of 95 percent. The FREE ECE programme is expected to improve this forecast.

What we are trying to achieve

Significantly increase Pasifika children's participation in early childhood education services.

Target

Lift Pasifika participation in early childhood education reported on entry to school from 85 percent (in 2005) to 95 percent by 2010.

Why this is important

Time spent in early childhood education enhances future learning. New Zealand studies¹ have shown that time spent in early childhood education has a significant positive relationship to academic achievement well into secondary schooling years. This is important because it confirms a range of international research that demonstrates the ongoing influence of early childhood education on children's learning.

How we are going

As can be seen in Figure 1.1, the gap between the proportion of Pasifika new school entrants who have participated in early childhood education services and the proportion of new school entrants from all ethnic groups who have participated in ECE services has narrowed over the past six years. Since 2000, the proportion of Pasifika new school entrants who have participated in early childhood education services has increased by 11 percent. During this same period the proportion of new school entrants from all ethnic groups who have participated in early childhood education services has increased by 4 percent.

¹ See the Competent Children, Competent Learners publication series on the Education Counts website.
In 2006, the percentage of Pasifika new school entrants who had participated in early childhood education services was 84.2 percent. European/Pākehā (98.0 percent), Asian (96.0 percent) and Māori (89.9 percent) all had greater participation rates than Pasifika.

The targeted participation rate for Pasifika new school entrants for 2010 is 95 percent. At this stage the forecast for 2010 for Pasifika is 88.5 percent, while for non-Pasifika it is 97.1 percent. This forecast does not take into consideration the expected positive impact from FREE ECE, which provides 20 free hours for all 3 and 4 year-olds.

The participation rate is forecast to increase by 2010 for Māori (to 92.6 percent), European/Pākehā (to 98.9 percent) and Asian (to 98.1 percent) groups.

Where to find out more

www.educationcounts.govt.nz

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Quality in Early Childhood Education

What we have found

Registered Pasifika teachers
The percentage of Pasifika early childhood teachers that are registered with the New Zealand Teachers Council is increasing at a faster rate than that of non-Pasifika early childhood teachers. However, Pasifika teachers are still less likely to be registered than other ECE teachers. In 2006, 43.9 percent of Pasifika early childhood teachers were registered compared with 57.5 percent of non-Pasifika early childhood teachers.

Quality in Pasifika ECE services
From 2008, at least half of all regulated teachers in teacher-led ECE services will be required to hold a recognised ECE teaching qualification. In 2006, only one-third of Pasifika ECE services (31 out of the 93) were meeting this requirement. These services will need to increase their number of registered teachers, or manage their rolls so that existing qualified staffing levels are sufficient to meet licensing requirements.

What we are trying to achieve

Improve the quality of early childhood education services attended by Pasifika.

Target
Increase the number of registered Pasifika early childhood education teachers.

Target
Improve reported quality in Pasifika early childhood education services.

Why this is important

Children benefit from participation in quality ECE services. Early childhood education teachers are registered to help ensure the quality of services. Teacher registration shows new teachers have successfully completed a recognised teacher education programme, and then receive supervision and support. Gaining full registration and maintaining a practising certificate assure currency of professional knowledge and practice.

How we are going

Registered Pasifika teachers
As can be seen in Figure 2.1, the percentage of Pasifika early childhood teachers that are registered is growing at a faster rate than that of non-Pasifika early childhood teachers. In 2006, 43.9 percent of Pasifika early childhood teachers were registered. This is almost 2.5 times higher than the figure for 2004 (18.4 percent). During the same period, the percentage of non-Pasifika early childhood teachers who were registered increased by less than 50 percent. However, Pasifika early childhood teachers are still less likely to be registered than non-Pasifika ECE teachers, of whom 57.5 percent are registered.

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2 Teachers required for an early childhood education service to meet the minimum regulatory requirements for staff:child ratios.
Quality in Pasifika ECE services

A 2006 Education Review Office (ERO) report confirms that having registered ECE teachers leads to improved quality in ECE services\(^3\). The Education Review Office evaluates and reports on the quality of education in ECE services as part of its regular cycle of reviews.

Many Pacific services provided programmes that were culturally enriching, and some of these were high quality. Most services met current requirements for staff qualifications. However, there was wide variation between Pasifika services in the type and quality of education provided, and some services needed to improve.

From the end of 2007, 50 percent of regulated teachers\(^4\) in teacher-led ECE services will be required to hold a recognised ECE teaching qualification. In 2006, as can be seen in Figure 2.2, 62 of the 93 Pasifika character services were not meeting this requirement. However, the number of services with Pasifika character that have less than 50 percent of their staff qualified has been decreasing steadily since 2004. This is good news as these services may face loss of licence, and closure, if they do not increase the number of registered ECE teachers. Almost two-thirds of Pasifika services are located in Auckland, where there is currently high demand for registered ECE teachers.


\(^4\) Teachers required for an early childhood education service to meet the minimum regulatory requirements for staff:child ratios.
In July 2007, the first intake of students into the Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) Pasifika Specialisation programme graduated from Auckland University of Technology. Also in 2007 there were the first graduates with the same qualification from Te Tari Puna o Aotearoa, the New Zealand Childcare Association. These current and prospective graduates are expected to increase the number of Pasifika registered and qualified teachers in early childhood education.

Comments from Pasifika teachers participating in early childhood professional development programmes are beginning to capture the nature of changes they are making to their practice. This is improving the quality of learning experiences for children in their services. Following are snippets from a provisionally registered Pasifika teacher and a fully registered teacher.
Case Study 1

Reflections from a provisionally registered Pasifika teacher following her engagement in Te Whāriki professional development

Participating in Te Whāriki professional development programmes has enabled me to learn so much and develop a deeper understanding in many aspects of the job, particularly working with children and in relation to teamwork. I also feel my attitude has changed. Now I am happy and always look forward to coming to work with the children. Meetings were facilitated in my mother tongue, which enabled me to gain a basket of knowledge and understanding.

At first I didn’t want to be part of the professional development because I knew that there would be lots of meetings. But soon I began to use my initiative to take responsibility for gathering data and I was happy to make changes in our environment for children’s learning and teachers. Since we have implemented changes to the environment, I noticed that children are not running around in the centre. Now the children are engaged in different areas of the curriculum and they are playing really well with their peers. The impact of these changes is reflected in the learning stories, where stories are richer and more colourful.
Case Study 2

Reflections from a fully registered Pasifika teacher following her engagement in Te Whariki professional development

Understanding the intent of learning stories in the early childhood curriculum and learning made it easy and interesting for me to understand the importance of interacting with children.

Earlier when using checklists, there was no interaction with children. Now, unlike before, when you write about children’s learning you can extend not only their learning but also the teachers’ knowledge in working with children.

I feel more professional now in meeting with parents and sharing their children’s stories. It is like a communication tool that helps form our relationships with parents and families. I now lead the staff in meetings, and this has given me the confidence to share and discuss with staff in an open and respectful way. Before, I was doing things on my own most of the time.

Where to find out more

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