Foundation Years
Ngā Haeata Mātauranga - Annual Report on Maori Education 2008/09

Foundation Years


This section reports on progress in 2008/09 in the Foundation Years focus area of Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success.

Successful learning in children’s early years is the first step to ensuring they remain engaged and achieving in education as they progress in education.

To ensure ‘Māori enjoying education success as Māori’, learners must have access to high-quality early childhood education and effective teaching in their first years at school.

Parents, families and whānau, iwi, communities, teachers and professional leaders all have a critical role in ensuring children’s educational success.

Contents

This section includes:

How to achieve change?

Summary of progress against the Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success targets and actions.

Discussion for each goal including:

• Why is this goal important?
• What do the data say?
• What progress has been made?

Overarching strategic intent


The overarching strategic intent of Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success is:

‘Māori enjoying education success as Māori’.

The goals of the Foundation Years focus area are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>Continue to increase Māori children’s participation in early childhood education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 2</td>
<td>Improve the quality of early childhood experiences and education services attended by Māori children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Strengthen the quality of provision by Māori language early childhood education services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 4</td>
<td>Improve effective transitions to school</td>
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<td>Goal 5</td>
<td>Improve teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy for Māori learners in their first years of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6</td>
<td>Strengthen the participation of Māori whānau in their children’s learning in the early years at school</td>
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</table>
How to achieve change?

Government’s actions to achieve the Foundation Years goals of Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success have been focused on:

- increasing participation in early childhood education for those who currently do not participate
- developing and implementing the National Standards to improve literacy and numeracy as the foundations for further learning and education success.

These two factors have the potential to make the most difference for Māori learners.

The actions in Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success are based on what evidence shows are the most effective ways to achieve system change in the Foundation Years:

- Increasing professional learning and capability of teachers:
  o high-quality teaching makes the most difference to student achievement across the sector
  o research has identified the characteristics of teaching and professional development that improve Māori learner outcomes.
- Focusing on responsive and accountable professional leadership:
  o principals or lead teachers who focus on teaching and learning as the major part of their role improve outcomes for learners.
- Increasing whānau and iwi authority and involvement in education:
  o parents, families and whānau play a critical role in supporting their children’s learning right from the start
  o learning is more effective when whānau and iwi are valued partners in the education process and when educators, whānau and iwi are open to learning from and with one another.

Education Agencies

- Ministry of Education
- Tertiary Education Commission
- New Zealand Qualifications Authority
- Education Review Office
- Career Services
- New Zealand Teacher’s Council

Ministry of Education
Statement of Intent 2009-14

The Chief Executives of all six government education agencies (see below) are committed to collective strategic leadership to ensure that Government’s priority outcomes for education are achieved.

The priority outcomes inform the operating intentions of each agency.

Priority outcomes for the Foundation Years are:

Priority Outcome 1: Every child has the opportunity to participate in high-quality early childhood education

Regular participation in high-quality early childhood education for a sustained period before primary school has been shown to positively influence a child’s future educational achievement.

Priority Outcome 2: Every child achieves literacy and numeracy levels that enable their success

The New Zealand Curriculum and Te Matauranga o Aotearoa, for Māori-medium education, provide the framework for what students need to learn during school in order to achieve their potential and participate fully in adult life. Literacy and numeracy skills are the foundation for continuing learning and provide access to other parts of the curriculum. For example, literacy and numeracy are needed to interpret and interrogate scientific concepts.
Summary

This section summarises progress in achieving the goals of Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success in the Foundation Years focus area.

It reports on achievement of:

- targets
- actions.

Foundation Years Summary:

Targets

Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success sets out key targets for measuring progress in achieving the goals of the Foundation Years focus area:

- increase the percentage of Māori new-entrant school children who have participated in early childhood education from 90% in 2006 to 95% by 2012.

![Figure 1: Percentage of new-entrant school children who have participated in early childhood education prior to starting school](image)

- increase the mean reading scores in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) for Māori year 5 students by 7% by 2011.

- in schools involved in indepth professional development, increase the proportion of Māori learners in English-medium education achieving at stage 4 or above on the number framework by the end of year 2 to be equal to or better than the proportion of non-Māori by 2015.
# Actions

Table 1: Outlining the goals and actions of the Foundation Years focus area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1:</strong> Continue to increase Māori children’s participation in early childhood education</td>
<td>Strengthen national communications and engagement campaigns and programmes to promote early childhood education participation to whānau and support them to make informed choices about early childhood education options</td>
<td>Work is underway to develop a new web-based resource for parents, families and whānau. <em>Pouwhakataki</em> (community liaison officers) have been working with whānau and education providers to share information and promote informed decision making.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Focus Ministry of Education resources on establishing new community based early childhood education services to meet the needs of Māori in areas of low early childhood education participation</td>
<td><em>Counties Manukau Project</em> announced the development and funding for three new centres and established three new playgroups. <a href="#">Discretionary Grants Scheme</a>: Funding from the discretionary grants scheme will create more than 400 new places in early childhood education centres. The grants include more than $5 million for new capital works in Counties Manukau.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review and focus the Promoting Participation Project to increase demand by whānau in areas of lowest participation</td>
<td><em>Promoting Participation Project</em>. 1411 Māori children were enrolled in the Project between July 2008 and December 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2:</strong> Improve the quality of early childhood experiences and education services attended by Māori children</td>
<td>Review referral and assessment systems to ensure equitable access for Māori children to quality special education early intervention services</td>
<td>Development of an external review process for <a href="#">Specialist Service Standards</a> which includes the evaluation of access, engagement and assessment for Māori clients eligible for, or receiving, special education services. Additionally work has been completed, and shared with <em>kaitakawaenga</em>, on a model of practice that focuses on supporting culturally-appropriate engagement and access for Māori clients.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establish evaluative reviews of the quality of provision for Māori children in early childhood education services</td>
<td>The <em>Education Review Office (ERO)</em> has included questions relating to <em>Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success</em> into reviewer questions for its evaluations of services. The ERO undertook a pilot study of the effectiveness of early childhood education services for Māori in 2008 and is shortly to release a national evaluation report.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strengthen regulatory processes for licensing early childhood education services that better reflect quality provision for Māori</td>
<td>The new <em>ECE regulatory framework</em> came into force on 1 December 2008. All new ECE services will be licensed under the new framework, which requires them to implement the principles and strands from the bi-cultural curriculum <em>Te Whāriki</em>.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Integrate the best evidence of what works for Māori children into all early childhood education professional development programmes to support effective teaching and learning</td>
<td>In 2008/09, <em>early childhood education professional development</em> was focused on better supporting services to promote and reinforce Māori cultural distinctiveness in the context of teaching and learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase support for Māori whānau and their children with special needs to access assessment and intervention programmes as early as possible</td>
<td>In special education, <em>kaitakawaenga</em> worked alongside specialists, helping them provide culturally-appropriate services to Māori children and young people, and their families, whānau and educators. Local partnerships were established with kōhanga reo, Māori health providers, and iwi to improve knowledge of and access to early intervention services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Strengthen the quality of provision by Māori-language early childhood education services</td>
<td>Develop an agreed set of outcomes that define Ministry of Education support to enable Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust to provide leadership to kōhanga reo.</td>
<td>Work with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust continued. A working group was convened to look at funding, sustainability and quality of kōhanga reo. It has identified shared objectives, and options on funding, quality and sustainability. A report from the working group is currently under development and is expected to be completed by June 2010.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Support teachers in Māori-language early childhood education services to upgrade their qualifications to meet teacher registration requirements</td>
<td>In 2008/09 the Government continued to offer awards to help teachers gain qualifications. In 2009, 23 Māori students applied for study grants. The grants help students to gain their first ECE teaching qualification. In 2009, 330 Māori teachers received incentive grants. Incentive grants support ECE services to meet the qualification requirements for licensing. Of these, 31 incentive grants went to Māori immersion or bilingual ECE services (where Māori is used at least 51% of the time). In 2009, 97 Māori students received TeachNZ Scholarships. Of these 24 received a scholarship which is mainly for those students who will enter a bilingual/immersion setting. 700 TeachNZ ECE Scholarships are available annually for students from low income backgrounds or students undertaking specific programmes equipping them to teach in kaupapa Māori or Pasifika settings. In 2008, 244 Māori students received a scholarship. In 2009, 329 Māori students received a scholarship.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop exemplars of what quality looks like in Māori language early childhood education services, to support the quality of teaching and learning</td>
<td>Te Whatu Pōkeka: Kaupapa Māori Assessment for Learning has been developed to support early childhood education teachers and whānau in assessing children’s learning from a Māori perspective and context.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Invest in research and development initiatives that gather evidence to support continuous improvement in Māori-language early childhood education centres</td>
<td>In 2008, Te Kōpae Piripono became an early childhood education Centre of Innovation and a report was published on this project. The Centre of Innovation programme ended in June 2009 due to the need to reprioritise funding to focus more on increasing participation. Furthermore, as part of the tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Education, Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust the parties agreed to invest time and effort into research and development to ensure the ongoing funding, quality and sustainability of kōhanga reo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 4: Improve transitions to school</td>
<td>Support whānau and their children to make an effective transition to school through the provision of resources and information programmes to whānau</td>
<td>A new research project is underway examining transitions for Māori learners between early childhood education and school, and between schools. This research will inform further work and advice to teachers, principals and parents to assist them support this transition for learners as well as possible.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop a ‘transition toolkit’ and, through professional development, support teachers in early childhood education and schools to work with whānau and improve the transition from early childhood education to school for Māori learners</td>
<td>Advice for parents, whānau, and teachers will be developed as part of the research project mentioned above.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 5:</strong> Improve teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy for Māori students in their first years of school</td>
<td><strong>Establish evaluative reviews to report on the effectiveness of the transition to school for Māori children as a priority in 2008/09 and 2009/10</strong></td>
<td>The upcoming Education Review Office evaluation report on early childhood services included some information about transitions, although this is not yet a strong focus of reviews.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support schools to use the best evidence about effective teaching and learning in early childhood education settings to influence quality teaching in the first years of school</td>
<td><strong>Support schools to use the best evidence about effective teaching and learning in early childhood education settings to influence quality teaching in the first years of school</strong></td>
<td>This has not been actioned yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Reading Recovery funding to ensure equitable access at a national level for learners with the greatest needs</td>
<td><strong>Review Reading Recovery funding</strong> to ensure equitable access at a national level for learners with the greatest needs</td>
<td>In 2009, <em>Reading Recovery</em> funding was targeted to support teachers and schools with high numbers of Māori students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend provision of the Literacy Professional Development Programme (LPDP) with a focus on learners at years 1 and 2 in schools with a higher proportion of Māori learners, and ensure that the focus on literacy in years 1 and 2 is supported by regional Ministry of Education Literacy Development Officers</td>
<td><strong>Extend provision of the Literacy Professional Development Programme (LPDP)</strong> with a focus on learners at years 1 and 2 in schools with a higher proportion of Māori learners, and ensure that the focus on literacy in years 1 and 2 is supported by regional Ministry of Education Literacy Development Officers</td>
<td>In 2009, additional <em>literacy-focused professional development</em> was provided for teachers of years 1–3 in schools with high percentages of Māori and Pasifika learners. This will not be continued in 2010. An upcoming report on 100 schools in the <em>Literacy Professional Development Programme (LPDP)</em> during 2008/09 will contain data on year 1 and 2 learner progress. LPDP will be retendered in 2010. Funding from both these projects will be reprioritised to support <em>National Standards</em>. In 2009, Literacy Development Officers targeted schools with high proportions of Māori learners.</td>
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<td>Focus schooling improvement initiatives on literacy achievement in years 1–4 in decile-1–3 schools</td>
<td><strong>Focus schooling improvement initiatives on literacy achievement in years 1–4 in decile-1–3 schools</strong></td>
<td>In 2008/09 there were 23 <em>schooling improvement</em> clusters involving 277 schools and 96,000 learners, of whom 40% were Māori. <em>Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success</em> was embedded in planning and reporting processes for 22 schooling improvement initiatives that focus on literacy and numeracy in decile-1–3 schools, years 1–4.</td>
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<td>Develop an equivalent Literacy Professional Development Programme for Māori-medium settings</td>
<td><strong>Develop an equivalent Literacy Professional Development Programme for Māori-medium settings</strong></td>
<td>The introduction of Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori from 2011 will be supported by new assessment tools and professional support for years 1–8 Māori-medium learners.</td>
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<td>Develop an ‘early years’ assessment tool for literacy learning at years 1–4 to support teachers to set clear expectations of learner progressions in literacy</td>
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<td>Literacy tools for years 1–4 have been scoped and will be aligned to the <em>National Standards</em>.</td>
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<td>Continue to strengthen numeracy development for Māori learners in years 1 and 2</td>
<td><strong>Continue to strengthen numeracy development for Māori learners in years 1 and 2</strong></td>
<td>Most schools have now participated in the <em>Numeracy Professional Development Project</em>. Māori learners were among those who made the most significant progress. These gains are sustained over time. (Tagg and Thomas, 2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrate the best evidence of what works for Māori learners into all professional development programmes</td>
<td><strong>Integrate the best evidence of what works for Māori learners into all professional development programmes</strong></td>
<td>In 2008/09, the Ministry of Education has been strengthening the way it evaluates <em>professional development programmes</em> to ensure that they identify how they are improving outcomes for and with Māori learners. There is evidence that schools with high numbers of Māori learners are being prioritised for school support services. The providers have been using <em>Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success</em> to inform their planning and training development.</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 6:</strong> Strengthen the participation of Māori whānau in their children’s learning in the early years</td>
<td>Integrate the evidence that supports involving whānau in the teaching and learning process into all professional development contracts, evaluations and quality teaching and leadership programmes</td>
<td>In 2010 there will be an increased emphasis for <strong>School Support Services</strong> contracts and professional development to focus on Māori-language programmes by liaising with families and whānau, hapū and iwi.</td>
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<td>Strengthen home–school partnerships by supporting schools to identify and access effective home-based literacy programmes; for example, the Reading Together programme</td>
<td><strong>Reading Together</strong> has now been piloted in Rotorua and is being expanded to up to 20 schools in the Manurewa area as part of the Manurewa Schooling Improvement Literacy Initiative.</td>
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<td>Support effective whānau participation in the implementation of <em>The New Zealand Curriculum</em> and <em>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</em> over the next two years</td>
<td>In 2008/09, <strong>professional development</strong> supported schools to develop their own school curriculum, based on <em>The New Zealand Curriculum</em> and <em>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</em>, that is responsive to their communities. There was a specific focus on helping English-medium schools develop culturally-responsive contexts for learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop a home-based literacy programme to support whānau with children in Māori-medium education</td>
<td>This has not been actioned yet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use existing communications programmes and other resources to clarify what whānau can expect quality early childhood education services and schools to provide in terms of teaching and learning and their rights as parents and whānau</td>
<td>In 2008/09, in addition to working with families and whānau in communities, <strong>pouwhakataki</strong>, community liaison officers, supported families and whānau to contribute to the nationwide consultation process on Reporting to Parents on Proposed National Standards.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Through the iwi partnerships programme, support iwi to build the capacity of hapū and whānau to engage and participate in early childhood education and early years schooling</td>
<td><strong>Professional development</strong> was available for iwi and community providers through <strong>Atawhangaia te Pā Harakeke</strong> to support active whānau engagement and participation in education. The Ministry is supporting iwi to undertake a variety of projects to engage whānau in the education of their children, through the Ministry/iwi partnerships.</td>
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**Discussion**

Successful learning in children’s early years is the first step to ensuring they remain engaged and achieving in education as they progress in education.

For each Goal from the Foundation Years focus area, this section discusses:

- Why is this goal important?
- What do the data say?
- What progress has been made?
- Conclusion

It also includes two case studies illustrating good education practice that contributes to ‘Māori enjoying education success as Māori’.

**Case studies**

*Where Playing is Learning!* **Encouraging participation in early childhood education**

*Reading Together*, **Helping parents, families and whānau work with teachers to support their children’s reading**
Goal 1 Continue to increase Māori children’s participation in early childhood education

Why is this goal important?

Early childhood is the most critical time for building the foundations for future success.

Attending high-quality early childhood education for sustained periods of time has positive effects that can last a lifetime. It is beneficial for children’s intellectual development and their attitudes and approaches to learning. (Mitchell et al., 2008)

It also helps students’ literacy, numeracy and logical problem-solving skills to at least age 16, regardless of their background. (Wylie et al., 2009b; Chamberlain, 2008)

It is because of the benefits of sustained participation in high-quality early childhood education that the Government is focusing strongly on increasing children’s participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Māori parents want from early childhood education</th>
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<tr>
<td>For Māori families, having access to early childhood education environments that support Māori cultural practices and language is an important factor in choosing a service.</td>
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<td>A whānau environment such as that offered by puna and playgroups can be an effective way of introducing whānau to early childhood education and encouraging participation. (Dixon et al., 2007)</td>
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<td>A <strong>pilot study</strong> (Education Review Office, 2008c) found that many Māori parents said their choice of service was influenced by the quality of the programme, for example, the ‘tuakana–teina’ approach, where older children worked with younger children.</td>
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<td>The extent to which the programme acknowledged their children’s cultural heritage influenced the choice of service for some parents. In one example a parent talked about the way the service promoted bilingual perspectives and encouraged language acquisition in both English and te reo Māori:</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>They used te reo Māori words for things, for example “put on your pōtāe (hat)”. I found this good as I do it at home.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many parents indicated the importance of early childhood education experiences in preparing their children for school:</td>
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<td><em>I want my child to reach all the goals as she grows, and be at the right level of learning for her age. I always want her to be able to do the best she can do and enjoy herself while trying.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>...to start to learn about routines and set activities to help her for when she starts school.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive relationships were also important in strengthening parent involvement. Most teachers and managers indicated that they had not yet developed ways of finding out about the hopes and expectations of parents and whānau of Māori children.</td>
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</table>
What do the data say?

Participation in high-quality early childhood education has long-term benefits for children’s achievement.

Despite steady improvement in early childhood education participation, the proportion of Māori new entrants who had attended early childhood education declined slightly from 90.6% in 2007 to 90.4% in 2008. However, this has increased again in 2009 to 91.4%.

The highest rate of participation in 2009 was in the South Island, and Nelson in particular, with a rate of 98.1% of Māori new entrants having participated in early childhood education compared with 98.9% of non-Māori children.

The lowest rates of participation in 2009 were in Northland (85.1%) and Auckland (84.2%), compared with 93.6% and 93.8% respectively of non-Māori children.

### Table 2: Participation of 2009 new entrants in early childhood education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Participation rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>98.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasifika</td>
<td>85.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 3: Participation of Māori and non-Māori new entrants in early childhood education 2005-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Māori</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>96.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education

## Type of service

Evidence suggests that for Māori parents, families and whānau, having access to early childhood education environments that support Māori cultural practices and language is an important factor in choosing a service. (e.g. Dixon et al., 2007) The majority of the 36,000 Māori children who attended early childhood education services in 2009 attended English-medium services. Those services vary considerably in the amount and quality of Māori language and culture in their programmes and environments. (Mitchell and Brooking; 2007).

The greatest increases in enrolments of Māori children in early childhood education have been in education and care services, where enrolments have increased by 6149 since 2001.

Māori-medium education involves students being taught either all or some curriculum subjects in the Māori language. This can be in:

- immersion (Māori language only)
- bilingual (Māori and English) programmes.

Māori-language education involves students being taught in Māori-medium settings or being taught te reo Māori in English-medium settings.

Of the Māori children in early childhood education in 2009, just under a quarter were enrolled in kōhanga reo. The number of children attending kōhanga reo has now stopped its steady decline from a high point of 10,409 children in 2004 to approximately 8,670 attending in 2007 and 2008. Enrolments in kōhanga reo grew to 8829 in 2009.

The number of kōhanga reo has steadily declined from 562 in 2001 to 470 in 2007. This decline continued with 467 kōhanga reo in 2008 and 464 in 2009. The numbers of ngā puna kōhungahunga have fluctuated, with a high of 41 in 2006 and a low of 27 in 2009.

While the proportion of Māori-medium centre-based services that are Māori immersion has fallen steadily over time (from 17.1% in 2002 to 12.5% in 2009), the proportion that are bilingual has increased (from 10.7% to 16.7%). As a combined total, Māori bilingual and immersion services have risen slightly (from 27.7% to 29.2%).
Education and care services have the highest proportion of Māori bilingual services (21.9% in 2009). A lower proportion of kindergartens (14.9%) and playcentres (10.8%) are bilingual. The proportion has risen over time for all three service types, except that playcentres dropped slightly in 2009. All kōhanga reo services are full Māori immersion.

Figure 2: Māori enrolments in ECE by type of service 2001-2009

Source: Education Counts (2009)

Figure 3: Enrolments in Māori-language ECE services 2000-2009

Source: Education Counts (2009)
There has been a decreasing trend in the percentage of Māori enrolments in services that use te reo Māori for more than 50% of their time and a consequent increasing trend in services that use te reo Māori less than 50% of their time.
Teachers

While culturally-responsive education does not necessarily mean that the teachers must be Māori, this can help.

The proportion of Māori early childhood education teachers has been increasing slowly since 2001. In 2009, 8.4% of all early childhood education teachers were Māori. This is still much less than the proportion of Māori children in early childhood education. In 2009, Māori children made up 16.2% of all early childhood education enrolments.

Excluding kōhanga reo, there was a higher proportion of Māori early childhood education teachers in education and care services than in other types of services.

Registration is an indicator of the likely quality of teaching. The number of registered Māori early childhood education teachers has leapt since 2004. In 2009, 52.8% of Māori early childhood education teachers were registered compared with only 23.2% in 2004. This is a greater increase than for non-Māori teachers (65.0% from 38.6%). The increase in registration is largely due to the implementation of the early childhood education strategic plan, Pathways to the future: Ngā Huarahi Aratahi, which requires all teachers in teacher-led services to be registered by 2012.

Table 4: Percentage of registered ECE teachers 2004-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Māori</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Number of Māori teaching staff in licensed ECE services by type of service and gender, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF SERVICE</th>
<th>Māori</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual - education and care</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence School</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and care service</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-based network</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excludes playcentres, kōhanga reo, reimbursed caregivers/home-based workers and licence-exempt groups

Figure 6: Number of registered ECE teachers, Māori and non-Māori, 2002-2009

Link to other early childhood education teacher tables
What progress has been made?

Government has made increasing participation its key priority in early childhood education.

In response to this priority, the Ministry of Education has been reviewing its early childhood education participation work programme to refocus resources on increasing participation by children from target groups, including Māori.

These activities are reported against the actions from *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*.

**Action**: Strengthen national communications and engagement campaigns and programmes to promote early childhood education participation to whānau and support them to make informed choices about early childhood education options

The main national communications and engagement campaigns and programmes, Te Mana and Team-Up have been concluded. Work is underway to develop a new resource for parents, families and whānau which will be available on the Ministry website.

**Action**: Focus Ministry of Education resources on establishing new community-based early childhood education services to meet the needs of Māori in areas of low early childhood education participation

The Counties Manukau Participation Project (CMPP) focuses on increasing early childhood education participation in Māori communities where it is well below the national average.

As part of this project in 2008/09, three early childhood education centres were confirmed for school sites, and more centres will be established in South Auckland. Among other projects, two street-side playgroups have been established in Papakura and Manurewa, and seven Educational Play Days have been held.

A ‘community champions initiative’ is being developed with community groups, and three new certified playgroups have been set up.

**Street-side playgroups** involve a family hosting an early childhood education service in their home for a few hours a week, and inviting their neighbours to come along too.

The aim is to do this on a number of streets, slowly building up interest and involvement by parents, families and whānau.

A ‘community champions initiative’ is being developed with community groups, and three new certified playgroups have been set up.

The Counties Manukau Participation Project will end in December 2010 – after which it will be evaluated. The expected evaluation will be qualitative and quantitative, and should include a focus on the transferability of the project as a concept to other areas with low participation in early childhood education.

In Budget 2009, the Government announced that $8.9 million in funding from the *Discretionary Grants Scheme* will create facilities for more than 400 new places in early childhood education centres. The grants include more than $5 million for new capital works in Counties Manukau.

The 2009 funding round allocated funding to create 30 new places at a kōhanga reo in South Taranaki, and five other kōhanga reo have grants to plan new buildings or refurbishments for over 120 children. Planning grants have also been given to projects that include supporting the development of Māori immersion centres.

**Action**: Review and focus the Promoting Participation Project to increase demand by whānau in areas of lowest participation

In the *Promoting Participation Project*, the Ministry of Education and community organisations work together on a number of initiatives to encourage families and whānau to participate in early childhood education. The Ministry currently has contracts with 26 providers.
Case study: Play Days – Where Playing is Learning!

Featuring in shopping centres and malls across Counties Manukau, Educational Play Days are a hands-on approach to increasing participation in early childhood education.

Educational Play Days showcase the kind of play activities that can be found in good-quality ‘playgroups’ – whānau and parent-run, not-for-profit early childhood education services. They provide information and support for people wanting to set up new playgroups or join existing ones.

Held in six shopping centres by the end of 2009, Educational Play Days have helped identify 146 children not participating in early childhood education. “The next step”, says Ministry of Education ECE Team Leader Yvette Guttenbeil-Po‘uhila, “is to engage these children in playgroups or other early childhood education services, and to work with interested families and communities to establish new playgroups.”

The initiative has brought together people from the Ministry of Education, the Council of Manukau Education Trust, Manukau City Council and the Promoting Participation Project. It is hoped that successful agency and community partnerships will help give more children access to quality early childhood education, creating a solid foundation for their future learning and lives.

In 2008/09, the Promoting Participation Project continued to:

- identify non-participating children in hard-to-reach families and whānau
- support families and whānau who choose to enrol their children in early childhood education.

Approximately 360 services enrolled children through the project. Between the beginning of July 2008 and the end of December 2009, there were 1411 Māori children enrolled in the Promoting Participation Project. Of these, 1043 stayed in early childhood education, and the retention of the other 368 is not yet known.

Additional activities

20 hours ECE was introduced in July 2007 to reduce the cost of early childhood education to parents and to increase participation. Under the 20 hours ECE policy, Government pays the average cost of ECE for children aged three to four years for up to 20 hours a week.

A year after its introduction, more than 2300 services (80% of eligible services) were participating, and this led to a 30% increase in early childhood education enrolments.

At 4 March 2009, 63% of the 276 eligible kōhangā reo were offering 20 hours ECE.

Commentary

One of the key barriers to participation is low availability of culturally-appropriate services.

Addressing low participation therefore means ensuring wider availability of culturally responsive services in addition to encouraging parent, family and whānau participation.

Current Ministry of Education projects and Government policy are making a positive difference. The increase in enrolments from the Counties Manukau and Promoting Participation projects is promising. However ensuring children remain in early childhood education requires further action. While these actions have had a local effect, they are still small in terms of scale.

The increase in overall enrolments from the introduction of 20 Hours ECE suggests that this policy is contributing to increasing participation. However, it is not clear if the 30% general increase in overall enrolments will be reflected in an increased proportion of Māori children entering school with some early childhood education experience.
Goal 2: Improve the quality of early childhood experiences and education services attended by Māori children

Why is this goal important?

High-quality early childhood education provides opportunities for the development of the foundations needed for success at school, including:

- attitudes such as perseverance, curiosity, critical thinking, questioning and confidence
- strong oral language in children’s first language as a basis for developing written literacy skills
- literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills. (eg, Mitchell et al., 2008)

The quality of early childhood education experiences is primarily the responsibility of the early childhood education staff and leadership, working with parents, families and whānau.

Positive outcomes for children can result from parents, families and whānau engaged with services such as in:

- parent-, family- and whānau-led early childhood education centres, where parent training and involvement in the education programme are core elements
- programmes combining good-quality early childhood education with parent education and support (integrated centres)
- teacher-led centres where teachers have encouraged parents to work with them on educational aims. (Mitchell et al., 2008)

What do the data say?

Teaching qualifications

Teaching qualifications are an important indicator of the likely quality of teaching and learning. The early childhood education strategic plan Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki has focused on improving quality, primarily by increasing the number of early childhood education teachers who are registered (and therefore have higher-level qualifications).

Despite this, English-medium early childhood education services vary considerably in the amount and quality of Māori language and culture in their programmes and environments. (Mitchell & Brooking, 2007)

Quality early childhood education

An international review of early childhood education literature concluded that quality early childhood education is where teachers and caregivers:

- are responsive to the children as individuals and members of their whānau
- provide for culturally-responsive learning
- provide an intellectually stimulating environment, including open-ended questions to extend thinking
- ensure opportunities for conversation and using complex language

and children:

- can choose activities that are suitable and engaging
- are encouraged to problem solve
- engage in interactions that involve sustained shared thinking. (Mitchell et al., 2008)

However, quality is understood differently depending on people’s cultural points of view. (Smith et al., 2000) For example, in Māori communities, family responsibilities for caring for children include emotional and spiritual development, transmission of culture, and development of identity. (Durie, 1997)

The review of the Promoting Participation Project found that for Māori families, having access to early childhood education environments that support Māori cultural practices and language is an important factor in choosing services (Dixon et al., 2007). Similarly, early childhood education that meets a child’s language and cultural needs is considered ‘important’ or ‘very important’ by over half of parents.

A study of parent decision-making about early childhood education found that like all parents, Māori parents think educational outcomes are the most important outcomes from early childhood education. However, Māori parents were more likely to rate language and culture as extremely important (39% compared to 27% of all those surveyed). (Robertson et al., 2007)
Teacher Supply

To increase the supply of teachers for immersion or bilingual early childhood education services, the Ministry of Education offers early childhood education scholarships for students who are studying towards an approved Māori-language education qualification. In 2008, 21 Māori students received a scholarship.

What progress has been made?

Although increasing participation has been the major focus of Government activity in early childhood education, actions to improve quality have also taken place. These are reported against the actions from *Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success*.

**Action:** Review referral and assessment systems to ensure equitable access for Māori children to quality special education early intervention services

In 2006 the Ministry of Education published *Specialist Service Standards* for specialist staff working with students with special educational needs. These standards cover the client pathway for students and their whānau. The pathway begins with **Access**, and outlines the need for strong relationships and networks with Māori and for information that is culturally-appropriate and easily understood by whānau. The next step of the pathway is **Engagement**. Special education staff need to provide culturally-appropriate processes and services to ensure that parents and schools feel they can continue to receive specialist support. Work to ensure these standards are met has proceeded on two fronts. Kaitakawaenga are a key component of the Ministry of Education Special Education services for Māori. They are frequently the first contact with Māori parents and whānau. The recently developed kaitakawaenga model of practice ensures that kaitakawaenga focus on the Access and Engagement parts of the pathway to ensure Māori children have equitable access and that their whānau feel comfortable with the support systems put in place.

Additionally, in 2008/09 the Ministry developed an external evaluation system of reviewing specialist staff adherence to all stages (including assessment) of the *Specialist Service Standards*. This approach includes a Māori perspective in the review questions and in the personnel of the review team.

The Ministry of Education is analysing patterns of referral across different areas in New Zealand, and is also looking at the age of referral. The aim is to reduce the age at which Māori children are referred to Special Education Early Intervention services, and to work with the community and other providers to increase the number of referrals for Māori children.

**Action:** Establish evaluative reviews of the quality of provision for Māori children in early childhood education services

The Education Review Office has included questions relating to *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* into reviewer questions for evaluations. This means that it will be able to evaluate how well all early childhood education services are contributing to the priority and intent of ‘Māori enjoying education success as Māori’.

In 2008, the Education Review Office undertook a pilot study of the effectiveness of early childhood education services for Māori in 2008 and will release a national evaluation report in 2010. It found that:

- in just over half the services, Māori children had opportunities to develop as confident and competent learners through programmes that included aspects of te reo and tikanga Māori
- in many services teachers and managers said that they treated all children the same, and that they did not have aspirations for Māori children that differed from those held for all children
- most of the services included reference to Māori perspectives in documentation such as their philosophy statement and policies, although such intentions were not always reflected in day-to-day practice, programmes and routines
- most services lacked a systematic approach to finding out about the aspirations of the parents and whānau of Māori children
- most services had not established adequate self-review processes to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision for Māori children.
**Action:** Strengthen regulatory processes for licensing early childhood education services that better reflect quality provision for Māori

The new ECE regulatory framework came into force on 1 December 2008. All new ECE services are licensed under the new framework. Services already operating before 1 December 2008 will be relicensed under the new framework over the period ending 30 November 2014.

The new framework requires services to implement the principles and the strands of *Te Whāriki: Early Childhood Curriculum*.

Services can choose to implement either the English version or te reo Māori version.

As part of the regulatory framework there is a separate set of criteria for kōhanga reo. The curriculum criteria for kōhanga reo were written in conjunction with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust. All other criteria are the same as centre-based services.

The Ministry has a protocol with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust to guide licensing and re-licensing.

**Action:** Integrate the best evidence of what works for Māori children into all early childhood education professional development programmes to support effective teaching and learning

The Ministry provides a range of professional development and support for early childhood education teachers to help increase the effectiveness of their practice.

In 2008/09, early childhood education professional development focused on better supporting services to promote and reinforce Māori cultural distinctiveness in the context of teaching and learning environments.

Early childhood education professional development contracts ended in December 2009. New contracts in 2010 will be refocused to offer improved support for Government priorities for early childhood education.

**Me Whakapūmāu** is a professional development programme designed to increase the quality of Māori language used in kōhanga reo. In 2008/09, Me Whakapūmāu provided intensive support to at least 28 kōhanga reo. Plans for and experiences from the intensive support programme are discussed by participating kōhanga in a forum, purapura wānanga – a kōhanga relevant whānau-based method of learning and teaching. Feedback from the intensive support is used to gauge the effectiveness of the programme. After the 2008 contract ended an associated programme of work was funded until June 2009.

Me Whakapūmāu has now been replaced by *Whakapiki i te Reo*. The intent of Whakapiki i te Reo is to provide professional development to kaiako to strengthen the skills and knowledge needed for the effective learning of, and teaching through, the medium of te reo Māori. The programme supports kaiako in kōhanga, and teachers in other types of ECE services, with 81–100% instruction in te reo Māori (13 out of 14 Māori early childhood education services). This extends the intensive support for improving the quality of te reo Māori instruction in early childhood education to services which are not part of the Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust network.

**Action:** Increase support for Māori whānau and their children with special needs to access assessment and intervention programmes as early as possible

In special education, kaitakawaenga work alongside specialists, helping them provide culturally-appropriate services to Māori children and young people, and their families and whānau and educators. Local partnerships have been established with kōhanga reo, Māori health providers, and iwi to improve knowledge of and access to early intervention services.

Across Ministry of Education Districts, the kaitakawaenga role has been developed through reflection to best meet the needs of whānau Māori in the district. Kaitakawaenga and District Māori Advisors in a range of Districts are working to help non-Māori-speaking colleagues get access to and work in kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa in culturally-appropriate ways. With the development of the new Auckland Strategy for the provision of Ministry of Education Special Education support, students in the Manurewa, Papakura, Tamaki and Otahuhu areas will in 2010 receive services from teams that will work within a kaupapa Māori framework.

The earlier children with special needs and their families and whānau are able to engage with specialist support, the better the likely outcomes. *Early Intervention Specialists* from Group Special Education work with children who have moderate-to-severe special needs and their families and whānau. This support can be provided in the home, in kōhanga reo and as children start school. Group Special Education has been working to ensure Māori receive a timely and responsive service for early intervention referrals. The next step is to look at reshaping service timelines once mokopuna are referred.
In-my-shoes, a DVD produced by PAI 4 ASD in partnership with Autism New Zealand and the Ministry of Education, is a recent resource to inform families and whānau about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It explains what ASD is and why sometimes children with ASD may seem unaware of, or insensitive to, cultural practices and protocols. A quarter of this DVD is aimed at kaumātua, families and whānau, and support agencies. The aim is to increase acceptance and understanding of children and others in the community with ASD.

Commentary

Current early childhood education varies in the ways it supports Māori children to learn as Māori. Delivery of professional development in the past has not made a significant difference to the capability of services to provide culturally appropriate teaching and learning.

The new professional development contracts are designed to improve this situation by ensuring that all professional development includes supporting services to promote and reinforce Māori cultural distinctiveness. The ongoing evaluations by the Education Review Office will help to identify how effective this is in shifting practice.

Special Education has a stronger focus now on increasing access and ensuring effective services for and with Māori children and whānau. This should lead to improvements in both access and outcomes in the future.
Goal 3: Strengthen the quality of provision by Māori-language early childhood education services

Why is this goal important?

Kōhanga reo involve much more than immersion in Māori language. These Māori-medium education providers operate within a specific cultural framework. They have played and continue to play a key role in realising community aspirations and supporting the understanding and development of Māori language, culture and knowledge. More recently, new forms of Māori-medium early childhood education have arisen in response to local demand. All children and whānau must be able to access quality Māori-medium early childhood education options if they so choose. This requires both quality provision and a strong network of providers.

Māori-medium settings across the education sector began from the aspirations of iwi and Māori communities to develop kōhanga reo for their children.

Supporting strong Māori-medium early childhood education services sits at the centre of the Ministry’s ability to deliver on its responsibilities to Māori as citizens and as the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

What do the data say?

The data for this goal is set out in Goal 1: Continue to increase Māori children’s participation in early childhood education.

What progress has been made?

Activities to strengthen the quality of provision by Māori-language early childhood education services are reported against the actions from Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success.

Action: Develop an agreed set of outcomes that define Ministry of Education support to enable Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust to provide leadership to kōhanga reo

Work with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust continued. A working group involving Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, the Ministry of Education and Te Puni Kōkiri was convened and has identified shared objectives, and options on funding, sustainability and quality of kōhanga reo. A report is expected to be completed by June 2010.
**Action:** Support teachers in Māori-language early childhood education services to upgrade their qualifications to meet teacher registration requirements

700 TeachNZ Scholarships are available annually for tertiary students studying towards a teaching qualification.

These include a number specifically allocated to students enrolled in programmes equipping them to teach in Kaupapa Māori or immersion settings. One stream of early childhood education scholarships focuses on teachers already employed in that sector who are studying approved courses that have a kaupapa Māori or Pasifika focus. Māori students studying towards early childhood education qualifications also apply for other teaching scholarships. The total number of scholarship applications from Māori students in early childhood education courses from 2008-2010 is represented in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Māori applications</th>
<th>Total applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>1441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>2027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2009, 97 Māori students received TeachNZ Scholarships. Of these 24 received a scholarship which is mainly for those students who will enter a bilingual/immersion setting.

**Study Grants** are designed to support students who hold particular qualifications to gain their first early childhood teaching qualification that leads to registration as an early childhood teacher. Study Grants contribute towards the costs that students face while studying. 23 Māori applied for student grants in 2009.

**Incentive grants** have been awarded since 2001 to support teacher-lead early childhood education services to meet the qualification requirements for licensing. Incentive Grants are intended to contribute to the costs early childhood education services face when assisting staff to gain their first New Zealand Teachers Council-approved early childhood teaching qualification that leads to registration as a teacher. In 2009, 330 Māori received incentive grants.

**Action:** Develop exemplars of what quality looks like in Māori-language early childhood education services, to support the quality of teaching and learning

*Te Whatu Pōkeka: Kaupapa Māori Assessment for Learning* was developed in 2008/09 to support early childhood education teachers and wānau in assessing children’s learning from a Māori perspective and context. It was launched in October 2009. This is a similar resource to the English-language exemplars *Kei Tua o te Pae/Assessment for Learning*.

**Action:** Invest in research and development initiatives that gather evidence to support continuous improvement in Māori-language early childhood education centres

The wānau of *Te Kōpae Piripono* had a shared desire to rear their children in kaupapa Māori – speaking the language of their ancestors and being at one with indigenous Māori concepts and practices. This led to the development of Te Kōpae Piripono as an early childhood education Centre of Innovation. A report was published on this project in 2008. The Centre of Innovation programme ended in June 2009 due to the need to reprioritise funding to focus more on increasing the participation of Māori children in early childhood education.

As part of the tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Education, Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, the parties agreed to invest time and effort into research and development to ensure the ongoing funding, quality and sustainability of kōhanga reo.

**Commentary**

In 2008/09, the Ministry of Education’s activities in early childhood education focused primarily on increasing participation. Work to strengthen the quality of Māori-language early childhood education providers was not a major focus of Ministry activities in 2008/09.
Goal 4: Improve transitions to school

Why is this goal important?

The transition to school and the first years there have a significant influence on children’s achievement well into secondary school. (Bishop et al., 2003; Rubie-Davies et al., 2006; Tunmer et al., 2003; Wylie and Hipkins, 2006)

The transition from early childhood education to school requires significant adjustments for children and their families and whena. The changes can tend to be greater for children whose previous experiences do not match school expectations, such as children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Teachers have a critical role in supporting the transition from early childhood to school by linking the new school expectations with children’s prior experiences. (Peters, 2004; Turoa et al., 2002)

In addition, research consistently demonstrates that the more children know about language and literacy before they arrive at school, the better they will read and the better they will then learn across all areas. Early childhood education teachers and teachers of year 1 children have a responsibility to ensure that prior literacy learning is effective and built upon at school.

Literacy for starting school

A key Ministry of Education resource for teachers, Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1–4, says that when children start school they benefit from knowing:

- how texts work
- that the spoken language is made up of sounds and words
- the alphabet (spoken and written)
- that the alphabet relates to the sounds of spoken language
- the visual features of print.

(Ministry of Education, 2003)

In 2008 the Ministry built on this resource with the Literacy Learning Progressions, which set out what reading and writing skills children need to know and by when.

These in turn provided a basis for developing the National Standards in reading and writing in 2009.

Together, these resources provide a strong basis for effective teaching of reading and writing in the first years of school.

What do the data say?

There is currently no systematic assessment of children on school entry that could provide data at a national level. The new National Standards will help with information about year 1.

Some research projects have shown that right from the start of school there are overall differences in reading and writing knowledge and skills between Māori children and pākehā children (McNaughton et al., 2000). Such differences tend to increase if teachers do not respond to them quickly and appropriately. (eg, Tunmer, 2003; Auckland Uniservices, 2002)

However, teachers do not always identify children’s previous literacy experiences or opportunities to build on them. (McNaughton et al., 2000)

Children also start school with a wealth of mathematics knowledge and experiences (Davies, 2009). Again, teachers do not always identify their new entrants’ mathematical abilities. Neither do they recognize the need to provide learning experiences that connect with children’s existing mathematics experiences and understandings. (ibid)

Critical early years

An Education Review Office report highlights that the early years of primary school are a critical time for children.

This is when they learn the reading and writing skills they need to engage with all aspects of The New Zealand Curriculum.

When children start school, each child’s literacy experience and knowledge is different. How well this experience and knowledge is recognised and used in their education on a daily basis is, to a large extent, in the hands of their teacher.
What progress has been made?

Activities to improve transitions to school are reported against the actions from *Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success*.

**Action:** Support whānau and their children to make an effective transition to school through the provision of resources and information programmes to whānau

A research project examining transitions for Māori learners between early childhood education and school, and between schools was initiated in 2009. This will provide robust information about the transition to school to inform further policy work and advice to teachers, principals, and parents and whānau to assist them support this transition for learners as well as possible. The project will be reported on in 2010.

**Action:** Develop a ‘transition toolkit’ and through professional development, support teachers in early childhood education and schools to work with whānau and improve the transition from early childhood education to school for Māori learners

The research project on transition will support the development of advice for parents and whānau about transition to school.

In relation to early childhood education teachers and teachers of year 1 children, current school resources are now providing a better link to the learning required in children’s early years. This can help early childhood education teachers understand how learning develops and what is required at school.

For example, the mathematics website for school teachers, [NZMaths](#) now includes a section for early childhood education. This site is intended to support early childhood education teachers to use opportunities that arise in everyday interactions with children to foster the development of mathematical thinking.

The site links directly to mathematics teaching and learning at school, including both the necessary content knowledge (learning progressions) and the most effective teaching practices.

The [Literacy Learning Progressions](#) include a section setting out the early literacy skills and knowledge children ideally need before they start school. This can help early childhood education teachers to identify what is important to foster in children’s early childhood education experiences.

**Action:** Establish evaluative reviews to report on the effectiveness of the transition to school for Māori children as a priority in 2008/09 and 2009/10

An upcoming Education Review Office evaluation report on early childhood services includes some information about transitions, although this is not yet a strong focus of reviews.

**Action:** Support schools to use the best evidence about effective teaching and learning in early childhood education settings to influence quality teaching in the first years of school

**Commentary**

The early years of a child’s life is the time when their potential can flourish or be stunted, depending on the learning experiences they have.

For example, the evidence is clear that early literacy is critically important in ensuring future success.

It is also clear that teachers are not always supporting children’s transition to school as well as they could, and are not building on children’s prior learning and experience. This is a particular concern for Māori children and immediately reduces the likelihood that they will be able to learn effectively at school.

Although some school resources provide links to early learning, it is not clear how many teachers in schools and early childhood education are using this information.

Actions in this area need further attention.
Goal 5: Improve teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy for Māori students in their first years of school

Why is this goal important?

Literacy and numeracy provide the foundations for further learning at school and throughout life.

If literacy and numeracy are not adequately mastered in the early years of school, it is difficult for children to catch up later. Since the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) requires students to achieve literacy and numeracy standards, ineffective teaching in the early years of school can ultimately undermine the students’ opportunities to achieve NCEA.

Literacy in particular is the key for accessing all other learning at school. In the Competent Children study, Wylie and Hipkins (2006) found that the first year at school is very important for the literacy achievement of children, with lasting consequences for wider school achievement to age 14 (at least).

Teachers’ low expectations of Māori children can mean that they do not extend their learning and reduce their opportunities to achieve success. (Alton-Lee, 2003) For example, research on the Numeracy Project has found that teachers limited the language they used in maths for Māori children. (Irwin and Woodward, 2005)

Teachers support literacy and numeracy learning best when they seek to understand where learners come from and connect with their experiences to build on their learning. (Bishop et al., 2003) The importance of culturally-responsive teaching is highlighted by results from the National Educational Monitoring Project which found that Māori students can perform better than pākehā students when the tasks involve Māori contexts. (Robinson et al., 2009)

What do the data say?

Evidence from the Ministry of Education districts suggests that many children in lower-decile schools are still at the first level of reading (magenta) at the end of their first year at school and, in some areas, 50% of learners are at levels 1–3 (magenta, red or yellow) by the end of year 1. The National Standards expect children to be on level 5 (green) by the end of year 1.

The latest results from an Education Review Office report on teaching reading and writing in years 1 and 2 classrooms shows that 30% of teachers had poor reading and writing practices.

Refer to side bar This will seriously limit the ability of children in those classrooms to achieve the reading and writing skills they need for future learning across the whole curriculum.

There is a high proportion of Māori learners in Reading Recovery, and for most it is very successful (with huge effect sizes of between 1.67 and 3.73). (Lee, 2009). An effect size of 0.4 indicates a significant effect and a one of 0.6 is large. Effect sizes of over 1 are extremely high.

Of learners who finished their series of Reading Recovery lessons in 2008, Māori learners and those from lower-decile schools made greater gains in reading and writing than Asian and pākehā learners. These greater gains are associated with a tendency for these learners to have lower scores upon entry. (Lee, 2009)

Effectiveness of reading and writing teaching in year 1 and 2 classrooms

In its recently published report on effective teaching in year 1 and 2 classrooms, the Education Review Office (2009) found that about 70% of teachers made good use of a range of effective reading and writing teaching practices in year 1 and 2 classes.

However, the remaining 30% of teachers had little or no sense of how critical it was for children to develop confidence and independence in early reading and writing.

These teachers had minimal understanding of effective reading and writing teaching, set inappropriately low expectations and did not seek opportunities to extend their own confidence in using a wider range of teaching practices. In these classrooms learning opportunities to motivate, engage or extend children were limited.

Teachers were slightly better at assessing reading than writing, 40% of teachers made little use of assessment in writing compared to 33% with limited use of assessment in reading.

The lack of confidence with assessing and teaching writing in some schools resulted in programmes that were not matched to each child’s writing development stage, or were focused on narrow writing opportunities.

Foundation Years
Despite this, Māori learners are less likely to have access to Reading Recovery (i.e., less likely to attend schools where Reading Recovery is offered). In 2008, only 70% of Māori learners had access to Reading Recovery compared with 76% of the total six-year-old population (unchanged from 2007 and 2006).

The results for 2008 from the Resource Teachers: Literacy (RT:Lits) were largely consistent with the previous years. In 2008, RT:Lits provided support for 4314 students considered at risk in literacy achievement. In 2008, the number of boys supported by RT:Lits outnumbered girls by more than two to one. Half (50%) of all students were Pākehā, one-third (37%) were Māori, 8% were Pasifika and 2% were Asian.

Overall, two out of three students had completed their programmes by the end of the year. A small number of students were referred on for alternative specialist support, or received incomplete programmes because they moved out of the area, moved from primary to secondary school or because of attendance issues.

Of students who received direct support from RT:Lits, pākehā (64%) and Asian (63%) students were more likely to have completed their programme than Māori (58%) students.

The introduction of a new reporting form in term 4 provided new insights into the impact of RT:Lits in reducing the number of students considered to be ‘at risk’ in literacy achievement. At the end of their period of RT:Lit support for 2008, 25% of students whose data had been recorded on the new forms had moved from being considered ‘at risk’ in literacy achievement to the level expected for their age group. A further 19% were considered ‘of concern’, which is an improvement from being ‘at risk’, but not yet achieving at the level expected for their age group.

National Educational Monitoring Project (NEMP)

Results from the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) show that between 2002 and 2006 the overall writing scores of pākehā and Māori learners got closer. Differences in achievement between pākehā and Māori students were smaller at year 8 than year 4, suggesting an improvement in achievement for Māori learners as they advance from year 4 to year 8.

The differences in achievement between year 4 pākehā learners and Māori learners decreased by about one third between 2000 and 2004. This was maintained, but not improved, in 2008. While year 4 pākehā learners still perform substantially better than year 4 Māori learners in speaking and listening assessments, these differences decreased between 2000 and 2008. However, substantial differences for year 8 Māori learners have not improved over the 8-year period.

In Technology, while year 4 pākehā learners still perform substantially better than year 4 Māori learners, these differences decreased between 2000 and 2008. The differences are larger at year 8 than at year 4.

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

Results from Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2005/06 published in 2008 show that while there were both high- and low-achieving students in all ethnic groupings, the average achievement of pākehā and Asian students was at a higher level than Māori students. Māori girls performed better than Māori boys. (Chamberlain, 2008)
PIRLS, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study assesses the reading literacy achievement of year 5 learners (aged 9) across the world.

Example of a PIRLS reading task: The Upside-Down Mice by Roald Dahl

Once upon a time there lived an old man of 87 whose name was Labon. All his life he had been a quiet and peaceful person. He was very poor and very happy.

When Labon discovered that he had mice in his house, it did not bother him much at first. But the mice multiplied. They began to bother him. They kept on multiplying and finally there came a time when even he could stand it no longer.

"This is too much," he said. "This really is going a bit too far." He hobbled out of the house down the road to a shop where he bought some mousetraps, a piece of cheese and some glue.

When he got home, he put the glue on the underneath of the mousetraps and stuck them to the ceiling. Then he baited them carefully with pieces of cheese and set them to go off.

That night when the mice came out of their holes and saw the mousetraps on the ceiling, they thought it was a tremendous joke. They walked around on the floor, nudging each other and pointing up with their front paws and roaring with laughter. After all, it was pretty silly, mousetraps on the ceiling.

When Labon came down the next morning and saw that there were no mice caught in the traps, he smiled but said nothing.

Question 1: Why did Labon want to get rid of the mice?

A. He had always hated mice.
B. There were too many of them.
C. They laughed too loudly.
D. They ate all his cheese.

Compared with other higher-performing countries, New Zealand had a large group of year 5 students who did not reach the PIRLS lower international benchmarks. A large proportion of Māori boys were in this group. There was no improvement in the average reading achievement of any of student groups from 2001 to 2005/06.

Year 5 students’ views about reading were more negative in 2005/06 than in 2001, particularly year 5 boys, Māori students, and Pākehā girls. Māori girls were more likely than boys to read for fun outside of school.

What progress has been made?

Activities to improve teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy for Māori students in their first years of school are reported against the actions from Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success.

Action: Review Reading Recovery funding to ensure equitable access at a national level for learners with the greatest needs

In 2009, Reading Recovery was targeted to support teachers and primary schools with high numbers of Māori learners. In 2009 the Ministry prepared a new model for the regional distribution of the 256 full-time teacher equivalent funding which supports the delivery of Reading Recovery. This was to inform the distribution of the resource for the delivery of Reading Recovery in 2011, with the intention of targeting the resource to greatest need.

In the 2009 agreements for Reading Recovery tutor services (who train and support Reading Recovery teachers), any extra tutor capacity was to be directed towards supporting schools with high numbers of Māori and/or Pasifika students, whether or not those schools were currently offering Reading Recovery.

Data from the 2009 milestone reports is currently being collated.
The tutor services the Ministry purchases expect each tutor to be delivering Reading Recovery to 2–4 learners. The agreements require tutors to direct their teaching to Māori and/or Pasifika learners in low-decile schools.

The data from the 2009 national Reading Recovery database is being analysed by the Ministry of Education Research Division, prior to publishing the report Annual Monitoring of Reading Recovery: The Data for 2009 later in 2010.

**Action:** Extend provision of the Literacy Professional Development Programme (LPDP) with a focus on students at years 1 and 2 in schools with a higher proportion of Māori learners, and ensure that the focus on literacy in years 1 and 2 is supported by regional Ministry of Education Literacy Development Officers

In 2009, additional literacy-focused professional development was provided for teachers of years 1–3 in schools with high percentages of Māori and Pasifika students. This will not be continued in 2010. This funding will be reprioritised to support the implementation of the reading and writing National Standards.

Evidence of the impact of this professional development on student progress and achievement in both reading and writing is due to the Ministry in 2010.

The Literacy Professional Development Programme (LPDP) has also been very effective in improving reading and writing across New Zealand. Since 2004, LPDP has led to significant improvements in reading and writing for children from year 1 to year 8. Some of the greatest gains have been made by the learners with the lowest initial achievement.

Findings from the LPDP 2008/09 cohort show that, in reading, Māori learners in the lowest 20% had progress equal to the progress of the lowest 20% as a whole and had a higher average rate of progress and higher scores at the end of the year than both pākehā and Pasifika students. Using the Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning, asTTle, Māori learners in the lowest 20% for writing have rates of progress that equal those of pākehā learners.

An upcoming report on 100 schools in LPDP during 2008/09 will contain data on year 1 and 2 learner progress and achievement. LPDP will be retendered in 2010 and funding will be reprioritised to support National Standards.

In addition, Ministry of Education Literacy Development Officers targeted schools with high proportions of Māori learners in 2009.

**Action:** Focus schooling improvement initiatives on literacy achievement in years 1 to 4 in decile-1–3 schools

Schooling improvement projects in clusters of low-decile schools with high Māori rolls have make a positive and statistically significant impact on the overall academic achievement of the targeted learners.

What is more, student outcomes actually continue to improve after the intensive project funding has ceased. In the Mangere and Otara clusters, the average reading results are now equal or close to the national average.

In 2008/09 there were 23 schooling improvement clusters involving 277 schools and 96,000 students, of whom 40% were Māori.

Many clusters show evidence of accelerated learning, with literacy and numeracy levels moving significantly towards, or meeting, national averages. As an example, in Manurewa in 2009, there were 13% fewer Māori learners in stanines 1–3 than in 2008. The main focus in 2010 will be aligning this work with the implementation of National Standards with the aim of lifting achievement in literacy and numeracy (reading, writing, and mathematics) by being clear about what students should achieve and by when.

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<th>Table 7: Stanines</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Calculating Stanines</strong></td>
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<td>Result Ranking</td>
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<td>Stanine</td>
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Learners test scores are put into stanine groups. The lowest 4% of scores are stanine 1, the next lowest 7% are stanine 2. Most learners (64%) are in stanines 4-6.

Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success has been embedded in planning and reporting processes for 22 schooling improvement initiatives that focus on literacy and numeracy in decile-1–3 schools for years 1–4.
**Action:** Develop an equivalent Literacy Professional Development Programme for Māori-medium settings

The implementation of Ngā Whanakatanga Rumaki Māori, the Māori-medium National Standards from 2011 will be supported by new assessment tools and professional support for years 1–8 Māori-medium students.

**Action:** Develop an ‘early years’ assessment tool for literacy learning at years 1–4 to support teachers to set clear expectations of learner progressions in literacy

**Literacy tools** for years 1–4 have been scoped for both English- and Māori-medium education. The implementation of the reading and writing National Standards will require appropriate assessment tools to be available for children from year 1. Literacy tools will be aligned to the National Standards.

**Action:** Continue to strengthen numeracy development for Māori learners in years 1 and 2

Most schools have now participated in the Numeracy Professional Development Project, designed to improve numeracy teaching across New Zealand. Māori learners were among those who made the most significant progress. (Young-Loveridge, 2009) Further research suggests that these gains are sustained over time. (Tagg and Thomas, 2007)

**Action:** Integrate the best evidence of what works for Māori learners into all professional development programmes

**School professional development** is one of the most effective ways to increase the quality of teaching. Overall in 2008/09, the Ministry of Education has been strengthening and enhancing the way it evaluates professional development programmes to ensure that they identify how they are improving outcomes for and with Māori learners.

**School support services** is the main infrastructure for professional development for New Zealand schools. The school support services contracts are made up of many areas of support including literacy and numeracy. Evidence of improved Māori learner achievement in literacy in years 1-8 was a key outcome of school support services professional development in 2008/09. Final learner achievement information for 2008/09 is due in 2010.

There is evidence that schools with high numbers of Māori learners are being prioritised for school support services. The providers, now part of the universities, have been actively looking at Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success to inform their planning and training development.

Ministry monitoring across all areas of the school support services contracts has a strong focus on Māori student achievement. Currently a framework for school support services is being developed to inform all professional development, with a focus on National Standards.
Other activities

The New Zealand Curriculum is a framework that provides English medium schools with the scope, flexibility and authority they need to design their own curriculum, which will in turn form the basis on which each teacher builds their specific learning programmes. In turn, the design of each school’s curriculum should allow teachers the scope to make interpretations in response to the particular needs, interests, and talents of individuals and groups of students in their classes, and their communities.

Community engagement is a key principle and requires schools to ensure the curriculum has meaning for students, connects with their wider lives, and engages the support of their families, whānau and communities.

In 2008/09, professional development supported schools to develop their own school curriculum, based on The New Zealand Curriculum, that is responsive to their communities. There was a specific focus on helping schools develop culturally-responsive contexts for learning. The Ministry is also developing exemplars and digital stories online to support effective teaching of The New Zealand Curriculum with Māori learners.

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa was launched in October 2008 as the curriculum for Māori-medium education. In 2008/09 the Ministry developed supplementary professional support materials to assist teachers to understand and deepen their knowledge of the learning areas of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

National Standards

In 2009, the Ministry of Education has been developing National Standards for English-medium schools in reading, writing and mathematics for all children from years 1 to 8.

The National Standards will be implemented in 2010 and will set out explicit expectations about what children need to learn, and by when, to support teachers to better identify the learning requirements of their students. This is particularly important in raising teachers’ expectations of the potential achievement of their Māori students. The implementation of the National Standards will help teachers to focus more accurately on the learning needs of their students, including their Māori students, to ensure they can access The New Zealand Curriculum.

The National Standards will also provide information for parents, families and whānau to inform their discussions with teachers about their children’s progress.

The introduction of the National Standards requires all schools to let parents know how well their children are doing in relation to the standards twice each year. These written reports will show whether their child is above the standard, at the standard, below the standard or well below the standard expected for their age and year level. These reports will also include the next steps for the child, and how parents can help at home.
National Standards Years 1–3

After one year at school, learners will:

- read, respond to, and think critically about fiction and non-fiction texts at the green level of Ready to Read
- create texts as they learn in a range of contexts across The New Zealand Curriculum within level 1. Students will use their writing to think about, record and communicate experiences, ideas and information to meet specific learning purposes across the curriculum
- be achieving at early level 1 in the mathematics and statistics learning area of The New Zealand Curriculum.

After two years at school, learners will:

- read, respond to, and think critically about fiction and non-fiction texts at the turquoise level of Ready to Read
- create texts in order to meet the writing demands of The New Zealand Curriculum at level 1. Students will use their writing to think about, record and communicate experiences, ideas and information to meet specific learning purposes across the curriculum
- be achieving at level 1 in the mathematics and statistics learning area of The New Zealand Curriculum.

Ngā Whanaketanga Rūmaki Māori – the Māori-medium standards were drafted in 2009 and are being consulted on in 2010.

Commentary

Effective teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy are critical to ensure the future success of all students.

It is clear that literacy and numeracy teaching for Māori learners is not as effective as for other groups. Although there are some initiatives that are leading to success for Māori, this is not reflected at the national level or in international assessments.

Work to enhance teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in the crucial early years must continue to be a top priority to ensure Māori enjoy education success as Māori.

Since the funding for the Literacy Professional Development Project (LPDP) and literacy professional development for years 1–3 has been reprioritised to support the National Standards, it is critical that the focus on National Standards produces outcomes and benefits for Māori learners that match or exceed those gained through those professional development programmes.
Goal 6: Strengthen the participation of Māori whānau in their children’s learning in the early years

Why is this goal important?

Parents, families and whānau are critically important in education success of their children, by:

- making informed choices about education options
- having high expectations of success
- providing a home environment that fosters learning
- knowing how to help children with their learning at home
- supporting schools to establish effective teaching and learning relationships and provide meaningful learning opportunities.

Effective partnerships between parents, families and whānau, and schools can improve the wellbeing, behaviour and achievement of children right into adulthood. (Biddulph et al., 2003)

Parents, families and whānau have extensive experience and knowledge that they can contribute to a learning partnership with teachers. Similarly, teachers have extensive knowledge that they can contribute to such a learning partnership with families and whānau.

Active participation by Māori parents, families and whānau, iwi and communities in wider school activities is also important to create conditions that are appropriate and effective for Māori learners. However, this can be a superficial role if parents do not also have opportunities to be fully engaged in their children’s learning.

Better engagement requires:

**Leadership**: Engagement between schools and their communities works well when there is vision and commitment from school leaders to working in partnership with all parents.

**Relationships**: Mutual trust and respect are critical to formal and informal relationships between staff and parents in which they share responsibility for children’s learning and well-being.

**School culture**: Schools that are committed to being inclusive enable all parents to be actively involved in decisions affecting their child, and respond to parents’ concerns and questions promptly.

**Partnerships**: Learning partnerships between teachers and parents strengthen parents’ understanding and involvement in their child’s education. Parents’ expertise and contributions are valued by teachers. Effective learning partnerships can have positive impacts on student outcomes.

**Community networks**: Parent and community expertise is valued and contributes to programmes and activities in the school. Schools are involved in community activities and events. Consultation is integral to engagement, and there is a shared understanding about the priorities for student achievement.

**Communication**: Schools communicate with parents in ways that are timely, useful and easily understood. Opportunities for exchange of information are both formal and informal and appropriate for those involved. Barriers to effective communication are actively identified and overcome.

Education Review Office (2008a)

What do the data say?

In 2008, the Education Review Office (ERO) reported that nearly three quarters of schools’ reviews included recommendations for improving engagement, particularly with parents, families and whānau of children from non-pākehā backgrounds.

As part of that work, the Education Review Office asked parents and whānau for their views about home-school engagement in order to understand their expectations of schools, what made engagement work well, what made it difficult, and what schools could do to improve.

The Education Review Office held discussions with groups of parents, including parents and whānau of Māori learners. Education Review Office staff facilitated 12 hui with Māori parents and whānau in Christchurch, Dunedin, Hawkes Bay, Kaikohe, Murupara, Rotorua, Manukau City, Whakatane, Waitakere City, Wellington and Patea.
The following section summarises some of the feedback from those parents.

**What did Māori parents expect of schools?**

Māori parents and whānau told ERO that their children and mokopuna are their priority and involvement in their education was critical. They expect:

- teachers to have a range of skills and strategies to engage their children in learning
- schools to give them honest, accurate and useful information about their children’s progress and achievement
- their children to become confident learners who accepted challenges and maintained their personal mana
- to be involved in their children’s schools, be invited to come to school and be part of their children’s learning

Their culture and values to be acknowledged through the use of Māori protocols and programmes in Māori language and culture that supported their children’s learning.

**What did Māori parents think schools expected of them?**

Māori parents and whānau believed that schools expect them to:

- support systems, expectations and procedures for attendance and behaviour management, and to follow protocols for visiting classrooms and teachers
- attend school hui and support their children with homework.

**What worked well?**

Māori parents wanted their children to have good learning relationships with their teacher(s). This was more likely to happen when teachers related well to their learners, respecting and acknowledging their cultural identity.

Māori parents appreciated opportunities to celebrate their children’s success and to have discussions about what and how well they were learning. Engagement worked well when, as parents, they were listened to and their ideas were valued.

Having Māori trustees on the board helped Māori parents to engage with their children’s school. It was often easier for the Māori perspective to be heard if there was more than one Māori trustee. Whānau groups for support, and opportunities for discussion about their children’s learning and wellbeing were also very important.

**What would help?**

Māori parents thought that schools could do a variety of things to improve engagement with them. For example:

- having a receptive principal (and senior management team) who actively listened to what they had to say.
- schools genuinely welcoming Māori
- hui and consultation activities offering different ways for parents to express their views and give feedback
- teachers who encouraged and took a lead in involving them through actions and not just words
- using homework as a way of strengthening home–school partnerships.
- having a Māori support group and the backing of kaumātua could also help strengthen engagement, along with dual language learning opportunities.
### What progress has been made?

Activities to strengthen the participation of Māori whānau in their children’s learning in the early years of school are reported against the actions from *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*.

**Action:** Integrate evidence that supports involving whānau in the teaching and learning process into all professional development contracts, evaluations and quality teaching and leadership programmes

The most effective parental involvement in early childhood education and schools is when teachers and parents are partners in a child’s learning. (Robinson et al., 2009)

In 2010 there will be an increased emphasis for School Support Services contracts and professional development to focus on Māori-language programmes by liaising with families and whānau, hapū and iwi.

**Action:** Strengthen home–school literacy partnerships by supporting schools to identify and access effective home-based literacy programmes: for example the Reading Together Programme

The school-based programme *Reading Together* supports parents to enhance their children’s learning. The Reading Together programme includes parents and teachers as partners in children’s learning. A key shift for the parents participating in the programme has been sharing, talking and reading together rather than ‘correcting’ the child (Tuck et al, 2007).

An in-depth study in 2007, *The Biddulph Group (2009)* investigated the ongoing implementation (since 2005) of Reading Together at St Joseph’s Primary School, Otahuhu, Auckland and revealed:

- statistically significant gains in children’s levels of reading comprehension which were:
  - sustained over time (two years)
  - evident across the siblings in the families who participated
  - over and above that achieved by a highly-effective school literacy programme
- that parents can make a significant difference to children’s reading achievement in partnership with a decile-1 school that is already providing highly-effective literacy education programmes
- positive and constructive changes in parents’ relationships with their children
- positive shifts in children’s independent reading
- enhanced relationships and interactions between teachers and parents.

Reading Together has now been piloted in Rotorua to test its effectiveness in that context. Evaluation findings suggest there are benefits for families, whānau and children when the programme is delivered in a culturally-appropriate and -responsive way. The programme is being expanded to up to 20 schools in the Manurewa area as part of the *Manurewa Schooling Improvement Literacy Initiative*.

**Action:** Support effective whānau participation in implementing *The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* in 2008–10

In 2008/09, professional development supported schools to develop their own school curriculum, based on *The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* that is responsive to their communities. There was a specific focus on helping English-medium schools develop culturally-responsive contexts for learning.

**Action:** Develop a home-based literacy programme to support whānau with children in Māori-medium education

This has yet to be actioned

**Action:** Use existing communications programmes and other resources to clarify what whānau can expect quality early childhood education services and schools to provide in terms of teaching and learning, and their rights and responsibilities as parents and whānau

**Pouwhakataki:** are community liaison officers who provide information to families and whānau and create links between families and whānau and education services. In 2008/09, in addition to working with families and whānau in communities, pouwhakataki undertook face-to-face information sharing and literacy
activities at a number of significant events including The Otara Boards’ Forum Literacy Day, the Ngāpuhi Festival in Auckland, and the Te Matatini National Kapahaka competition. They also supported families and whānau to contribute to the nationwide consultation process on Reporting to Parents on Proposed National Standards.

Case study: Reading Together

John Good, Te Puna o Te Mātauranga, is thrilled with the buzz in Manurewa around the Reading Together programme. He commented “We’ve never had such networking between teachers, schools, librarians, iwi and communities.”

Reading Together, developed by Jeanne Biddulph in 1982, is a research-based programme (consisting of four 75-minute workshops) which enables parents/whānau to help their children with reading at home. While families learn how to support their children’s reading more effectively (eg by choosing appropriate reading materials and helping children overcome problems), teachers build deeper understanding of the child and whānau and what is important for them.

The result is learning partnerships that build on the strengths of both family and school.

Teachers have found that being involved in the programme implementation has:

“reinforced our belief that all parents want the best for their children and that we have to find ways of encouraging them into school”

“helped us to realise how much we take for granted that parents know how to help, and how much personal reading experiences impact on how parents read with their children”

“helped us to recognise that we should never assume, and that even the most confident parents appreciate professional input – some aren’t sure how to help their children”

(Feedback from Reading Together Workshop Leaders)

Research studies have shown that children whose parents are involved in Reading Together have made greater gains in reading than other students, and their reading has continued to improve over time. Parents appreciate learning how best to support their children’s reading – for example, how to develop their understanding, confidence and enjoyment, and when and how to correct and praise.

For example, one parent said:

“I have learnt patience when reading with my child, and understand them better with reading. I find it easier to get my son to read with me. It’s nice to read with him.”

Another parent commented:

“Happy to choose books he wants to read. Wants to go to the town library and bring back a ‘wad’ of books. Very confident now. Has also encouraged others at home to read.”

(Feedback from parents/whānau participating in Reading Together)

A significant finding from a Ministry of Education Group Māori study in Rotorua in 2008/09 was the importance of cultural responsiveness in helping whānau feel respected, acknowledged and genuinely welcome on the Reading Together programme. As a result of the programme the majority of whānau felt more able to talk to the teachers, including the Deputy or Associate Principal.

Reading Together was included in the Manurewa Literacy Project (launched in August 2009). The Project is a large-scale campaign to raise literacy and education achievement in the area. John looks forward to seeing the programme help to realise the potential of the young learners of Manurewa. “Reading Together has enjoyed powerful results for over 25 years. Now children, parents, whānau and schools of Manurewa have the opportunity to share in that success.”

More about Reading Together
Several iwi involved in Ministry/iwi partnerships have identified early childhood education and early years schooling as areas of focus. The Ministry is supporting them to undertake a variety of projects that share the aim of fully engaging whānau in the education of their children. The projects are at different stages of development and implementation. It is expected that this work will produce outcomes for Māori learners over the longer term.

Atawhaingia te Pā Harakeke is a professional development programme responsible for developing and providing training and support services for iwi and Māori Community Provider Groups who work directly with families, whānau and children. The programme is delivered by Te Kōmako support and training team.

Since 2001, over 120 providers have either attended the marae-based wānanga facilitated by the team or are currently receiving intense mentoring and support from the regional Waewaetaha (coordinators) with the support of Te Kāhui Whakaruruahau (cultural advisors) and Te Hunga Whakangūngū (specialised facilitators).

In 2009, the programme was implemented in Mataatua-Waiariki, with 23 Special Education Māori staff from Hamilton, Rotorua, Napier and Taupo attending training in October 2009. Three programmes of Atawhaingia Te Pā Harakeke were completed from June – Dec 2009 with 14 provider groups throughout the Far North, Mataatua/Waiārikī and Tairāwhiti regions. The evaluation of the pilot training indicated that incorporating kaupapa Māori principles, knowledge, tools and practices is a key success factor. The Kāhui Whakaruruahau have always provided ongoing cultural support and together with the Te Kōmako team, there is a constant focus on ensuring that this thread of cultural knowledge and experience is woven throughout the training.

Consultation with Parents, Family and Whānau on National Standards and Reporting to Parents

Plain-language reports to parents are a fundamental aspect of the new policy on National Standards in primary and intermediate schools. Consultation with parents, family and whānau members was an opportunity for them to provide their views on the most helpful type of reporting.

Meetings with parents formed an important part of the nationwide consultation programme on the draft National Standards and reporting to parents from mid-May to early-July 2009. These meetings supplemented the opportunity to provide input by completing the feedback form (in hard copy and online).

National Standards in the new National Administration Guidelines (NAGs)

The new National Administration Guidelines require schools to:

• report school-level data in the Board’s Annual Report on National Standards under three headings:
  o school strengths and identified areas for improvement
  o the basis for identifying areas for improvement
  o planned actions for lifting achievement

• report in the Board’s Annual Report on:
  o the numbers and proportions of students at, above, below or well below the standards, including by Māori, Pasifika and by gender
  o how students are progressing against the standards as well as how they are achieving.

These requirements apply to annual reports on the 2011 school year, except for schools implementing Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, in which case they apply from the 2012 annual reports.

The National Administration Guidelines also require schools to “report to students and their parents on the student’s progress and achievement in relation to National Standards. Reporting to parents in plain language must be at least twice a year.”
Other activities

Early childhood education and school partnerships with parents can support parents in their role as children’s first teachers. While many early childhood education services provide support and guidance to parents as part of their day-to-day activities, more focused support is sometimes required.

An early childhood education service-based Parent Support and Development Project has been designed to provide parent education, social support and outreach activities to families and whānau. It is developing the role of early childhood education centres as a community hub, or venues, for parent support.

The project is aimed at families and whānau at risk of poor outcomes who have children aged up to three years. The project is piloting 18 programmes over a period of four years. Of the 10 services involved in the second series of pilots until 30 June 2010, one is a kōhanga reo and two are early childhood education services with high proportions of Māori children. The programme is based on current evidence that:

- programmes that combine parent education/support and early childhood education can raise child outcomes
- connection between home and early childhood education environment leads to positive education outcomes
- early years are a critical opportunity to engage parents, families and whānau in education. Some vulnerable parents will access early childhood education services even when reluctant to access other services and
- comprehensive programmes that address the real needs of parents, especially in children’s early years (0–6), can significantly improve children’s achievement.

An independent evaluation is currently underway, which includes case studies, data analysis and phone surveys. Eight centres have been selected for case studies to capture detailed analysis. Results are due in 2010 and will inform advice to Government on the future funding of the existing centres and potential expansion of the programme.

Incredible Years is a special education programme that provides support for families and whānau with children who have behavioural issues. It is a parenting and teaching programme that builds positive relationships and encourages desirable behaviour from young children.

In Taumarunui, Special Education has used a collaborative approach towards engaging with whānau within the rohe. Group Special Education works with local Māori agencies to ensure a quality programme is accessible to whānau in the area.

The South Auckland Incredible Years programme reports that parents are finding they are better able to manage their children’s challenging behaviour.

Commentary

Actions in 2008/09 to strengthen the participation of Māori whānau in their children’s learning in the early years at school have focused on small scale investments such as Reading Together and the Parent Support and Development Project, and the general nationwide consultation process on reporting to parents.

The outcomes from other initiatives such as Atawhaingia te Pā Harakeke are identified in a range of ways that will be brought together under the new Ministry monitoring system for Māori in education, the Measurable Gains Framework. This will enable better overall identification of effectiveness in relation to other initiatives.

National Standards reporting will provide a basis for evaluating outcomes and a basis for discussions between parents and teachers. These discussions could strengthen the participation of Māori whānau in their children’s learning if they are part of a wider conversation and effective engagement.

The ‘Parent Voices’ report (Education Review Office, 2008b) could inform the development of further actions to assist parents and schools engage more effectively.
Looking Ahead

In 2010 the Ministry of Education will continue to focus actions on enhancing education success for and with Māori.

The key priorities in the Foundation Years will be increasing participation in early childhood education and improving literacy and numeracy achievement and better engagement with parents.

Early childhood education

The Counties Manukau Project is due to end by December 2010. The project has been monitored and the Ministry will evaluate the impact of the activities conducted as part of the project. The Ministry will take the best outcomes and results and trial and duplicate them in other areas.

Following Budget 2009, 20 hours ECE is to be extended to all kōhanga reo from 1 July 2010. Work is progressing on policy and system changes to support this move. In addition, from 1 July 2010, 20 hours ECE will apply not only to children aged three to four years but also to five-year-olds.

Extending 20 hours ECE is expected to increase parent choice and flexibility about when and how they choose to use early childhood education.

Early childhood education professional development contracts ended in December 2009. New contracts in 2010 will be refocused to offer improved support for Government priorities for early childhood education.

In 2010 there will be an increased emphasis for School Support Services contracts and professional development to focus on Māori-language programmes by liaising with families and whānau, hapū and iwi. A cultural-responsiveness policy framework will be developed by June 2010.

Changes to the teacher registration targets in October 2009 mean that the early childhood education sector is on track to meet 80% registered teachers by 2012 and there is no longer a shortage of registered early childhood education teachers.

There are still difficulties establishing an even distribution of registered early childhood education teachers across all services. Some services in low socio-economic, rural or isolated areas have difficulty finding registered staff.

There is a shortage of registered early childhood education teachers with Māori-language skills and cultural knowledge. However, improving the targeting of teacher supply initiatives should increase the supply of registered early childhood education teachers with these skills.

The work examining transitions for Māori students between early childhood education and school, and between schools will be reported on in 2010. This will inform further work and advice to teachers, principals and parents to assist them in supporting this transition for students as well as possible.

Schooling

The National Standards for years 1–8 will begin to be implemented in 2010, with the first reports to parents expected by mid-year.

Further professional development and resources will be available in 2010 and beyond to support the effective implementation of the National Standards.

For example, in 2010, literacy professional development funding will be reprioritised to focus on supporting the implementation of National Standards in reading and writing.

Boards will be required to set National Standards targets in their 2011 charters and report against these targets in their 2011 annual reports. For schools implementing Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, this will be required from the 2012 school year. Ngā Whanaketanga Rūmaki Māori – the Māori-medium standards – are currently being drafted and will be trialled and consulted on in 2010.

From February 2010, teachers in English-medium schools will be required to report to parents in writing, at least twice a year, about how their child is progressing and achieving in relation to the reading, writing and mathematics standards.
The Reading Together component of the Manurewa Literacy Project will be evaluated to examine whānau engagement in relation to the Reading Together programme, and the effects on Māori learner outcomes. Specifically, the evaluation will explore what factors promote and sustain effective whānau engagement with Reading Together, the impact of Reading Together on whānau literacy practices, the professional development needs of teachers to deliver the programme responsively to Māori students, and the Ministry’s role in effective implementation.

The evaluation began in March 2010 and will continue alongside the implementation of Reading Together in Manurewa until the end of 2011.

A new website for parents, families and whānau will be developed with a focus on plain-language reporting around the National Standards and providing parents with clear information about teaching and learning.

**Key challenges ahead**

Key challenges for the Ministry of Education, other agencies and the education sector will be to:

- accelerate recent enrolment increases for Māori in early childhood education by expanding and building on successful participation initiatives such as the Counties Manukau and Promoting Participation projects
- To improve teaching and learning it is important that the implementation of National Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga Rūmaki Māori – the Māori-medium standards is supported by increasing the effectiveness of teaching and learning for Māori students, especially in relation to cultural responsiveness
- increase the supply of teachers proficient in te reo Māori in early childhood education and school settings
- reprioritise resources to focus more urgently and specifically on improving the literacy and numeracy achievement of children in their first two years at school
- focus policy, research and investments on increasing the capability of early childhood education and school teachers to be culturally-appropriate and responsive
- focus policy, research and investments to increase the effectiveness of school–whānau engagement
- identify ways to improve the transition to school for Māori children, parents and whānau.