

The strategies developed to *promote collaborative relationships* are designed to:

- improve the development and educational achievement of children between birth and age eight through forming strong links between ECE services, parent support and development, schools, health and social services.

Implementation of strategies under this goal will provide a better co-ordinated range of education support services to young children, parents, families and whānau and opportunities for communities of learning to develop.

Supporting Strategies

The implementation of the strategic plan will be supported by four more broadly focused strategies:

- review of ECE-related regulations, to be undertaken between June 2002 and December 2003
- review of the ECE funding system, to be undertaken between May 2002 and July 2003
- conducting of research to inform future ECE policy development and monitor progress
- involvement of the sector in ongoing policy development and implementation.

A Stepped Approach

The strategic plan will be implemented in seven steps, the early steps laying the foundations for later action. The steps are not necessarily sequential; some overlap. This approach balances the inherent tension between increasing participation and lifting quality. It also means that all the necessary building blocks are put in place to ensure success.

Checking Progress

Longitudinal research will measure the progress of implementation against the three goals as the plan unfolds. In this way the plan will be open to a cycle of continuous improvement over its 10-year life, as the measurement of the strategies' success feeds back into ongoing policy development and implementation.



Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki

2002

2012

A 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Summary-English



*A journey towards increased participation,
improved quality and stronger relationships*



Summary

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a critical first step in building the foundation for a child's ongoing learning and development. While New Zealand is fortunate in having a strong ECE sector there are opportunities to build on its strengths. To fulfil the Government's vision of lifting the educational achievement of all New Zealand children it is vital that all those working within the ECE sector share a common vision of what success looks like. The Strategic Plan for ECE draws a picture of that vision for ECE and provides a 10-year plan of action for improvement.

Setting the Direction

The culmination of intensive consultation across the ECE sector, the plan presents a shared vision between the sector and the Government. At the plan's core are three goals:

- increase participation in quality ECE services
- improve quality of ECE services
- promote collaborative relationships.

The plan includes specific strategies for the building of an ECE sector responsive to the needs of Māori and Pasifika peoples.

A Change in Focus

Major changes in the ECE sector are required to achieve the plan's three goals. Some of the biggest shifts in direction will be:

- new funding and regulatory systems to support diverse ECE services to achieve quality ECE
- better support for community-based ECE services
- the introduction of professional registration requirements for all teachers in teacher-led ECE services, such as those already applying in the schools sector and kindergartens
- better co-operation and collaboration between ECE services, parent support and development and education, health and social services to empower parents and whānau to be involved in their children's early learning
- greater involvement by the Government in ECE, focusing particularly on communities where current participation in quality ECE is low.

The Strategies

The plan provides a comprehensive network of interconnecting strategies to focus the activity of all sector partners as they work together to achieve the goals.

The strategies developed to *increase participation* in quality ECE services are designed to:

- focus on communities where participation is low, particularly Māori, Pasifika, low socio-economic and rural communities
- be driven by the needs of those individual communities
- increase the Government's role in facilitating access to quality ECE services
- support ECE services to be more responsive to the needs of children, parents, families and whānau.

Implementation of strategies under this goal will identify barriers to participation and promote the benefits of participation to parents, families and whānau. Greater practical and funding help will be available for the establishment and ongoing running of quality services.

The strategies developed to *improve the quality* of ECE services are designed to:

- implement the curriculum (*Te Whāriki*) effectively
- ensure teachers, ratios and group size support quality
- provide for quality interactions between teachers/parents and whānau and children
- establish and reflect on quality practices in teaching and learning.

Implementation of strategies under this goal will increase the number of registered ECE teachers and improve teacher-child ratios and group size. The particular support needed by parents and whānau supplying ECE services will be further investigated and specific actions will be undertaken to promote the effective implementation of *Te Whāriki* and quality teaching and learning practices.