



*“As a career, it’s more than I thought it would be. I thought it was about working in classrooms. But we’re involved in the whole life of the child – all aspects from in school to out of school.” - Gary McClintock (Psychologist, Motueka)*

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Starting each day with a visit to the dean might sound like punishment to most teenagers.

But for 13 year old Ben it’s a chance to sit down with an empathetic adult, have a chat and focus on the things he enjoys about school.

A few months ago Ben found school a struggle. Rules were for breaking, teachers were impossible to relate to and lunchtimes were for scrapping with other kids.

Mum and dad barely recognised their son and, for the first time in their lives, felt worried about his future.

But that’s all in the past thanks to the intervention of a Ministry of Education psychologist and a whole lot of successful teamwork.

Starting out, the psychologist’s first (and most important) step was to meet the relevant people in Ben’s life and form a team.

Together, factors impacting Ben’s behaviour were identified and strategies were chosen to support Ben at school. The identified factors that were seen to hinder and support Ben’s learning were all considered when the team developed his individual education plan that outlined what each team member would do, when and how.

Today, the team’s hard work is paying off. Ben is more settled, engaged in class and has a new-found love of athletics. His teachers are adapting the way they teach to better suit his needs. And mum and dad are again hopeful about their son’s future.

#### **Nature of Work**

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Psychologists work closely with parents, caregivers, teachers and other specialists to help children and young people with special education needs learn and develop.

Psychologists observe and assess children and young people who are referred to the Ministry of Education by teachers, parents or health specialists for learning and behaviour needs.

They talk to adults in a child or young person's life and observe their overall development and behaviour to find out what the individual's needs are. The process can occur at home or in an early childhood education service or school setting, wherever is most appropriate.

*"Every student is different and requires a different response – that's why working as a team is so important. Mums, dads, teachers and teacher aides – we all have an important role to play and a lot of knowledge and experience to contribute."* – Carolyn Crum (Educational Psychologist, Arrowtown)

As a psychologist, you'll adapt the way you work to suit the individual needs of a child or young person and tailor your approaches to suit the context in which they live and learn.

Psychologists work with other specialists and agencies for extra support with behaviour, communication, hearing and other special education needs. As a result, they develop close working relationships with a range of education, health and community professionals.

*"The key is to look at what's behind a student's behaviour. Sometimes lessons are too difficult. Sometimes they're too easy. Other times a child's social skills or specific learning needs may be the barrier."* – Carolyn Crum (Educational Psychologist, Arrowtown)

Preparing programmes and providing them to a child or young person's support team for feedback and ideas are central to a psychologist's role.

Programmes become part of a child or young person's individual education plan (a plan can be made up of several programmes each tailored to meet an individual's different needs). Over time, programme strategies are implemented, monitored, reviewed and adapted.

*"Good people skills are really important because the way we work is collaborative. You're constantly making assessments about leadership – do I need to take the lead in this situation or should someone else take control?"* – Gary McClintock (Educational Psychologist, Motueka)

Psychologists may also have the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience by developing programmes and providing training to early childhood education services, schools and community groups.



*"I find the variety of what I do very satisfying – no day is ever the same."*

– Gary McClintock (Educational Psychologist)

### **Who are we?**

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The Ministry has offices throughout New Zealand where we aim to provide access to education and learning for all New Zealand's children and young people.

You'll help people see that children and young people with special education needs are wonderful, invaluable, and – with the right support – learn, achieve, participate and contribute at school, with their families and in the wider community.

*"There's nothing like seeing a young person's happy face and seeing they're learning."* – Carolyn Crum (Educational Psychologist, Arrowtown)

Maybe you're still at school or studying at university. Maybe you're in a related career but feel like a change. Regardless of your situation, now is a good time to think about career opportunities with the Ministry of Education.

### **Where can I go in my career?**

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Becoming an education psychologist with the Ministry of Education gives you the rewards and challenges of the job itself, as well as opportunities to develop your career.

You'll be supported and supervised by experienced professionals within the Ministry. Keeping up to date with the latest research evidence, taking part in ongoing training and mixing with a wide range of highly skilled and talented professionals will keep you challenged and stimulated.

*"We strive to build positive working relationships with schools and families, sometimes in very isolated rural communities. I'm continually inspired by the people I work with."* – Carolyn Crum (Educational Psychologist, Arrowtown)

# Meet Carolyn Crum, a *Psychologist* in Arrowtown



9AM TUESDAY MORNING: Carolyn starts the day discussing an intervention with her client's teacher.

*“There’s nothing like seeing a young person’s happy face at school, seeing them participating in class with their peers and seeing that they are learning.”*

**HER BACKGROUND:** Carolyn is a full-time Educational Psychologist with the Ministry of Education.

After 13 years primary teaching, Carolyn upskilled and registered as a psychologist in 2008. She’s added to her Bachelor’s Degrees in Education and Arts and Diploma in Teaching with a Master’s Degree in Educational Psychology from Massey University. In 2007, she took part in the Ministry’s year-long psychology internship programme.

**HER STORY:** Carolyn thanks her mum for initially inspiring her latest career move.

“She worked in special education and brought us up to be inclusive and to value diversity.”

Seeing the positive impact specialists often had on student outcomes and the enjoyment of teaching students with learning and behaviour needs, Carolyn took time out to study and change careers.

Today, Carolyn works mainly with primary and secondary school students with severe behaviour needs and special education needs.

Carolyn says: “Every student is different and requires a different response – that’s why working as a team is so important. Mums, dads, teachers, teacher aides – we all have an important role to play and a lot of knowledge and experience to contribute.”

Sometimes lessons are too difficult. Sometimes they’re too easy. Other times a child’s social and emotional skills or specific learning needs may be the real issue.

**THE REWARDS AND CHALLENGES:** Carolyn rates positive outcomes for students as the big reward of the job.

After all, she says: “There’s nothing like seeing a young person’s happy face at school, seeing them participating in class with their peers and seeing that they are learning.”

She also rates effective teamwork as a big reward of the job, yet, she says, building a team can be challenging, too.

Carolyn’s advice for people interested in a career like hers is to plan and get advice on what to study early on.

“You need to ensure that you have all the pre-requisite skills to apply for the postgraduate courses.”

She also advises that people need to be prepared to work hard once they are accepted.

“While the internship is a fantastic opportunity, it’s also quite intense. You need good organisational and time management skills and really big batteries to get through the year.”

**HER FUTURE ASPIRATIONS:** Carolyn is loving her new career. She aspires towards a PhD at some stage but is happy to stay put for now.

“I’ve got a great job and I’m surrounded by inspirational people. What more could anyone ask for?”

Want to speak to someone like Carolyn about a career as an Educational Psychologist? Give us a call or drop us an email.

Moving into one of our fixed term, practice focused leadership roles will give you the chance to lead change and improve services from within the organisation.

Other career opportunities include management, getting involved in special projects and offering supervision.

### **What skills and knowledge do educational psychologists have?**

- ▶ knowledge of normal and delayed child development
- ▶ skill in managing special education needs, particularly learning and behaviour, in a variety of settings
- ▶ knowledge of human physiology and neurology
- ▶ knowledge of psychology, education theory and child development
- ▶ knowledge of community and family support services
- ▶ excellent communication, teaching, research, planning, assessment and administration skills.

### **What qualifications and experience do I need?**

You will need a master's degree in psychology, a postgraduate diploma of education psychology (or an equivalent) and registration as a psychologist with the [New Zealand Psychology Board](#) (a requirement under the Health Practitioners' Competency Assurance Act).

Research and plan for your career by checking out the Career Services website. If you're still at school useful subjects include biology, science, maths and English.

Teaching, education and/or psychology are all relevant undergraduate degrees. [Massey University](#) and [Canterbury University](#) offer qualifications that lead to postgraduate diplomas and internships in educational psychology and child and family psychology and to registration with the New Zealand Psychology Board.

The Ministry of Education offers [study awards](#) to help students in their final intern year.

### **What about my personal qualities?**

You'll spend lots of time with people from a range of ages, cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles. So, you will need to listen, build trust and inspire confidence.

Being understanding, patient, supportive, creative and practical are all great personal qualities for an educational psychologist.

Having a strong interest in team work and collaborating with other professionals is important.

### **What salary and other benefits can I expect?**

Salaries for educational psychologists vary between \$40,000 and \$81,000 per year, depending on skill, experience and the sector in which you work.

The Ministry offers five weeks' annual leave and flexible working conditions, giving you the opportunity to balance work with child care, travel and training commitments.

### **Where can I find out more?**

Speak to an educational psychologist or contact the ministry at:

- ▶ 0800 622 222
- ▶ [special.education@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:special.education@minedu.govt.nz)

Check out the websites listed below:

New Zealand Psychologist Board :  
▶ [www.psychologistsboard.org.nz](http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz)

New Zealand Psychology Society  
▶ [www.psychology.org.nz](http://www.psychology.org.nz)

Ministry of Education, Special education  
▶ [www.minedu.govt.nz/educationsectors/specialeducation.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationsectors/specialeducation.aspx)

▶ [www.minedu.govt.nz/sestudyawards](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/sestudyawards)

Universities  
▶ [www.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.auckland.ac.nz)  
▶ [www.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz)  
▶ [www.massey.ac.nz](http://www.massey.ac.nz)  
▶ [www.otago.ac.nz](http://www.otago.ac.nz)  
▶ [www.waikato.ac.nz](http://www.waikato.ac.nz)  
▶ [www.vuw.ac.nz](http://www.vuw.ac.nz)

Careers information  
▶ [www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)