



November 2009

## 20 Hours ECE

20 Hours ECE helps reduce cost barriers so more children can benefit from quality early childhood education (ECE). It currently allows three- and four-year-olds enrolled in teacher-led ECE services and some kōhanga reo to receive up to 20 hours a week of early childhood education with no compulsory fees.

### How 20 Hours ECE works

Currently all three- and four-year-olds at an ECE service offering *20 Hours ECE* can get up to six hours a day and up to 20 hours per week of ECE with no compulsory fees. If a child does not start school when they turn five, they can continue to be eligible for *20 Hours ECE* for up to 28 calendar days after their fifth birthday.

The hours are also available to five-year-olds with special education needs who are on a formal transition-to-school plan.

### Which services offer 20 Hours ECE

All teacher-led ECE services and some kōhanga reo are eligible to offer *20 Hours ECE*. As at March 2009, 87 per cent of eligible services and 63 per cent of eligible kōhanga reo were offering *20 Hours ECE*.

From July 2010, *20 Hours ECE* will be extended to all kōhanga reo, playcentres, and to five-year-old children enrolled and attending ECE services.

### How to register for 20 Hours ECE

- If your child is currently enrolled at an ECE service, ask if they offer, or plan to offer, *20 Hours ECE*.
- If your ECE service offers the scheme, you will need to complete and sign an enrolment agreement, and attest (confirm) which days and hours you will claim as part of your child's *20 Hours ECE* entitlement.
- The attestation may be part of the enrolment agreement, or a separate form. Your service will give you this form shortly before your child turns three (or when enrolling your three- or four-year-old) and can help you complete the information required.
- You can select any hours during the week to use as part of your child's *20 Hours ECE* entitlement, as long as they are hours that your child is enrolled to attend and they do not exceed six hours a day and 20 hours a week.

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If your child attends more than one eligible ECE service, you may split the hours claimed across both services, as long as:

- no more than 20 hours a week and 6 hours a day are being claimed, and
- you don't claim the same hours twice.

## Other fees and charges

If your child is attending ECE for more than six hours on any one day or more than 20 hours a week in total, your ECE service is likely to charge you fees for the remaining hours.

The ECE service cannot charge you fees for any hours covered under *20 Hours ECE*, but they can request optional charges for additional services over and above their regulatory requirements. They must tell you what these are. You can choose whether or not to pay optional charges. However:

- if you agree to pay an optional charge, you commit to continuing to pay that charge until your child is no longer enrolled with the service.
- if you do not agree to pay an optional charge, you are confirming that you do not want the ECE service to provide the specified additional services to your child.

Services can also ask for a voluntary donation, which does not have to be for anything specific. You can choose whether or not to pay this.

You may be able to get additional subsidies or help with paying fees through Work and Income (<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/supporting-children-and-families.html>) depending on your circumstances.

## More information

For more information, talk to your ECE service or email [20hours.ece@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:20hours.ece@minedu.govt.nz).

