ENSURING EVERY CHILD GETS THE BEST POSSIBLE START

Early childhood education (ECE) plays a valuable role in a child’s development. It is one of the greatest investments we can make in the future of New Zealand children.

National recognises that regular participation in quality ECE significantly increases a child’s chance of future educational success, particularly children from vulnerable families. Quality education is vitally important. It provides the opportunity for any child from any background to get ahead and make the most of their lives.

Children who start behind, too often stay behind. That’s why we have set a Better Public Service target of 98 per cent of all children starting school having participated in ECE in 2016.

We have increased ECE funding, and at the same time targeted it to help children from our most vulnerable communities.

Internationally, New Zealand ranks in the top group of OECD countries in terms of the money we spend on each child in ECE, and the total amount of public money we spend on ECE.

National has a comprehensive, successful, and sustainable education plan which includes a focus on raising achievement for five out of five children and young people.

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

→ Continue to invest significantly in ECE. National has invested more in ECE than ever before, almost doubling spending from over $800 million in 2007/08 to $1.5 billion in 2013/14.

→ Continue to progress towards our Better Public Service target of 98 per cent of children starting school having participated in quality ECE in 2016.

→ Bed in the Early Learning Information (ELI) system, allowing us to track how many children are attending ECE and for how long.
NATIONAL IS...

$ INVESTING MORE THAN EVER IN ECE

✔ Almost doubled spending on ECE, from over $800 million in 2007/08 to $1.5 billion in 2013/14.

✔ Spreading ECE funding more equitably to get more children participating, while working hard to raise the quality of provision where necessary.

✔ Supporting 20 Hours ECE, which recent research shows more than meets the average cost of delivering quality ECE.

✔ Extended 20 hours ECE to playcentres, kohanga reo, and five-year-olds.

TARGETING RESOURCES TO AREAS THAT NEED IT MOST

✔ Providing better information for parents in areas of low participation about the benefits of ECE for their children.

✔ Funding new Maori and Pacific bilingual and immersion ECE services.

✔ Developed new strategies, such as supported play-groups and play days in local communities, to increase participation in hard-to-reach areas.

OUR RESULTS SO FAR

MORE CHILDREN THAN EVER ARE PARTICIPATING IN ECE

The number of children starting school each year having participated in ECE has increased to 96 per cent.

96% OF CHILDREN STARTING SCHOOL HAVE PARTICIPATED IN ECE

ECE participation for Maori children has increased from 89 per cent in 2008 to 93 per cent in 2014.

Pasifika participation has increased from 84 per cent in 2008 to 90 per cent in 2014.

INCREASED THE NUMBER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROVIDERS

From 3,923 providers in 2008 to 4,284 in 2013.

Created over 6,000 new child places in priority areas since 2010, through targeted grants for quality providers.
WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

→ Continue to aim for 98 per cent of children starting school having participated in ECE in 2016.

Additional funding will support an estimated 5,800 more children to attend ECE by June 2018, which brings us closer to our Better Public Service target.

A $53.6 million boost to the subsidy rates for ECE providers to reflect rising costs and to help keep fees affordable for parents.

→ Ensure funding is fair and sustainable.

National will do this by:

→ Retaining 20 Hours ECE.
→ Working with ECE providers to reduce bureaucracy so they can dedicate more time to your child.

→ Implement the Early Learning Information (ELI) system

National will collect a range of data from ECE providers so we can track how many children are attending ECE and for how long. This will provide valuable information over time and help inform future policy developments focused on maximising learning outcomes.

→ Create better transitions from ECE to primary school

National will work with the sector to improve implementation of the curriculums to ensure continuity of early learning from ECE to primary school.

DON’T PUT IT ALL AT RISK

Labour would...

❌ Fail to deliver on its expensive promises. We are currently investing more than $800 million per year in the 20 hours ECE policy and Labour is suggesting it can expand it by another five hours a week for only $60 million. That doesn’t add up.

❌ Go “Back to the Future” with their ECE policy and unpick what we are already doing, and what is already working. National is already targeting ECE in areas of need, and has already introduced new approaches to providing ECE to better meet the needs of vulnerable families.