

ECE Taskforce Consultation Document Released

Submitted by Carol Stovold on Sat, 2011-10-15 04:38
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Education Minister Anne Tolley says the Government is moving to end the variability of quality in early childhood education (ECE) services and give better information to parents.

It comes as the Minister announces the first steps in the Government's response to the ECE Taskforce report, which received more than 4000 submissions during a two-month consultation period.

"The ECE Taskforce emphasised the benefits of high-quality early childhood education for young children's learning and development," says Mrs Tolley.

"It also raised concerns about the variability of quality across services. These concerns were echoed in the consultation results.

"Parents told us they want to know their children are being educated and cared for in a high-quality environment. They want stronger action where services are poor quality, and they want more information and accountability.

"We are now going to work closely with the sector to develop practical solutions that will benefit children, families and ECE services."

Sector advisory groups will be set up to work with the Government on:

- * Identifying and improving the practice of low-quality services
- * Developing new and improved policies for ECE for children under two years old
- * Improving the transition for children from ECE to primary school

"It is also the right time to carry out a national evaluation of the 15 year-old ECE curriculum Te Whariki, to make sure it is continuing to meet the needs of children and to decide if any improvements need to be made," says Mrs Tolley.

"Importantly, we will be developing interactive web-based tools to help parents choose the right ECE service for them.

"The Government is investing \$1.4 billion in ECE this year and it is clear that changes need to be made to the outdated and overly bureaucratic funding system.

"A new funding system will be developed in the long-term in consultation with the sector, but this needs to be done carefully to make sure no families are disadvantaged.

"And I can guarantee that universal access to 20 hours ECE will be a feature of any new system.

"We recognise the Waitangi Tribunal claim lodged by Te Kohanga Reo National Trust Board, and will not make any policy decisions affecting kohanga reo without first consulting with the Trust Board."

Full and summary reports on consultation following the release of the ECE Taskforce report can be found at www.lead.ece.govt.nz [2]

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1110/S00274.htm> [3]

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