

National Report Summary

ERO publishes evaluation reports on education issues of national importance. This handout is a summary of a recent national report - it captures the key points and highlights findings which you may find useful. The full report is available on our website - www.ero.govt.nz

Use of Equity Funding in Early Childhood Services (October 2013)

Use of Equity Funding in Pacific Early Childhood Services (October 2013)

In 2012-2013, the Education Review Office (ERO) evaluated the use of Equity Funding in early childhood services and also specifically evaluated how Pacific early childhood services used this funding.

Equity Funding is one of the Ministry of Education's current funding schemes for eligible early childhood services to support and enrol vulnerable children.

ERO has published two complementary reports to discuss the findings of these evaluations. As well as good practice examples and self-review questions, both reports identify some of the challenges including the extent to which Equity Funding can effectively contribute to the Government's goals of increased participation in early childhood education.

Use of Equity Funding in Early Childhood Services

The first report discusses how effectively 147 early childhood services used Equity Funding and the extent to which the Equity Funding objectives of participation and quality in early childhood education (ECE) were achieved. Sixty-one percent of services reviewed were highly effective or effective in their use of Equity Funding. These services were mostly deliberate in their use of this funding for its intended purposes.

Use of Equity Funding in Pacific Early Childhood Services

The second report is about how 15 Pacific early childhood services used Equity Funding to increase Pacific children's participation and support them to develop their language, culture and identity. ERO found 11 of the 15 services were effective in their use of Equity Funding.

These services had several initiatives to maintain the participation of currently enrolled children and support their language, culture and identity. The initiatives were responsive to Pacific children's interests and their parents' aspirations.

All 15 services identified the need for more Pacific resources to support children's language, culture and identity.

Highly effective use of Equity Funding in both reports included:

- strategies and initiatives that ensured and supported participation in ECE by vulnerable children
- strategies that included keeping costs of ECE affordable for parents, providing a supportive and inclusive environment for children with special needs, and engaging and developing relationships with the children, parents and whānau
- ongoing professional learning and development for teachers and training for parent-educators
- regular review of the use of Equity Funding and identifying the positive impacts for targeted children or the need to modify strategies
- meeting the Ministry's reporting requirements.

Challenges and opportunities

Both reports identify some of the challenges faced by services and the sector in relation to Equity Funding.

These challenges include the extent to which Equity Funding can be used to increase participation in early childhood education. There is also a need for more services to use self review to evaluate the effectiveness of their use of Equity Funding.

Effective use of Equity Funding - self review questions for services

Components of Equity Funding

- Do we know the objectives of each component of Equity Funding?
- How do we use Component A to support enrolled children's regular attendance, in particular Māori, Pacific and special needs children in our service?
- How do we use Component A to increase participation by non-enrolled children in our service?
- How do we use Component A to enable children with special needs and non-English speaking children to participate in quality early childhood education?
- In what ways do we use Equity Funding to support children with special needs and non-English speaking children's transition from home to our service and from our service to school?
- How do we use Component C to support children's culture, first language and identity?
- How do we use Component C to support teachers to improve programme implementation in the language of the service?

Building relationships

- What processes do we use to find out about the interests and aspirations of children and their parents?
- How do we inform parents, whānau and communities about the use of Equity Funding?

Self review

- To what extent do we use self review to evaluate the effectiveness of our initiatives and strategies in relation to the objectives of Equity Funding?
- What evidence do we have about the impact of professional learning and development on our teachers' capacity to support children to participate in high quality early childhood education?
- How do we use self review to evaluate what is working well and to identify what we could do to improve our practice in supporting children to participate in high quality early childhood education?
- What processes do we use to find out if we have met the Ministry of Education's reporting requirements?

*Centre managers are focused on ongoing improvement, building capacity amongst staff and sustaining effective practice. This was reflected in their decisions about the use of Equity Funding. Management identified transport as a major cost to parents for their children to attend the service. By providing transport, the centre was able to support children's regular attendance and participation in early childhood education. This also supported parents by keeping transport costs low and increasing participation by their children.
(Provincial service with 55 percent Pacific children)*



FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at www.ero.govt.nz/national-reports

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The Child – the Heart of the Matter